

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

LIAHONA



LIAHONA



ON THE COVER

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THE FRIEND COVER

Photo illustration by John Luke.

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SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH FAMILY

I was touched by the story "Sharing the Gospel with Dad" in the February 2001 *Liahona* (Spanish). When I read it, my eyes filled with tears. Perhaps I reacted with this emotion because the author's father was baptized, and I thought about what would happen if my parents accepted the things our Heavenly Father has prepared for us and were baptized. My wife and I pray for our family members to find the path of truth.

Juan Carlos Ñaupari Aguirre,
Valencia First Branch,
Valencia Spain District

A GROWING TESTIMONY

When I was baptized I wanted to have a strong testimony like other members of the Church. I fasted and prayed until I gained a small testimony, but I still felt a little sad. Then I read "A Growing Testimony" by President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, in the January 2001 *Liahona* (Spanish). President Faust said that our testimonies will continue to grow, and I know this is true. My testimony is getting stronger every day. I'm grateful and happy to be a Latter-day Saint and to have a growing testimony.

Gilberto Cordero Castro,
Coronado Branch,
San José Costa Rica Toyopán Stake

LIAHONA PLEASANT TO READ

I was born with dyslexia. But I want to say that the *Liahona* is pleasant to my eyes to read, and I am able to read it longer at one sitting. When I read the *Liahona* (Swedish) today, I received answers to many questions that I have been thinking about and working on.

Erik Mattsson,
Örebro Branch,
Stockholm Sweden Stake



A PROPHET'S COUNSEL

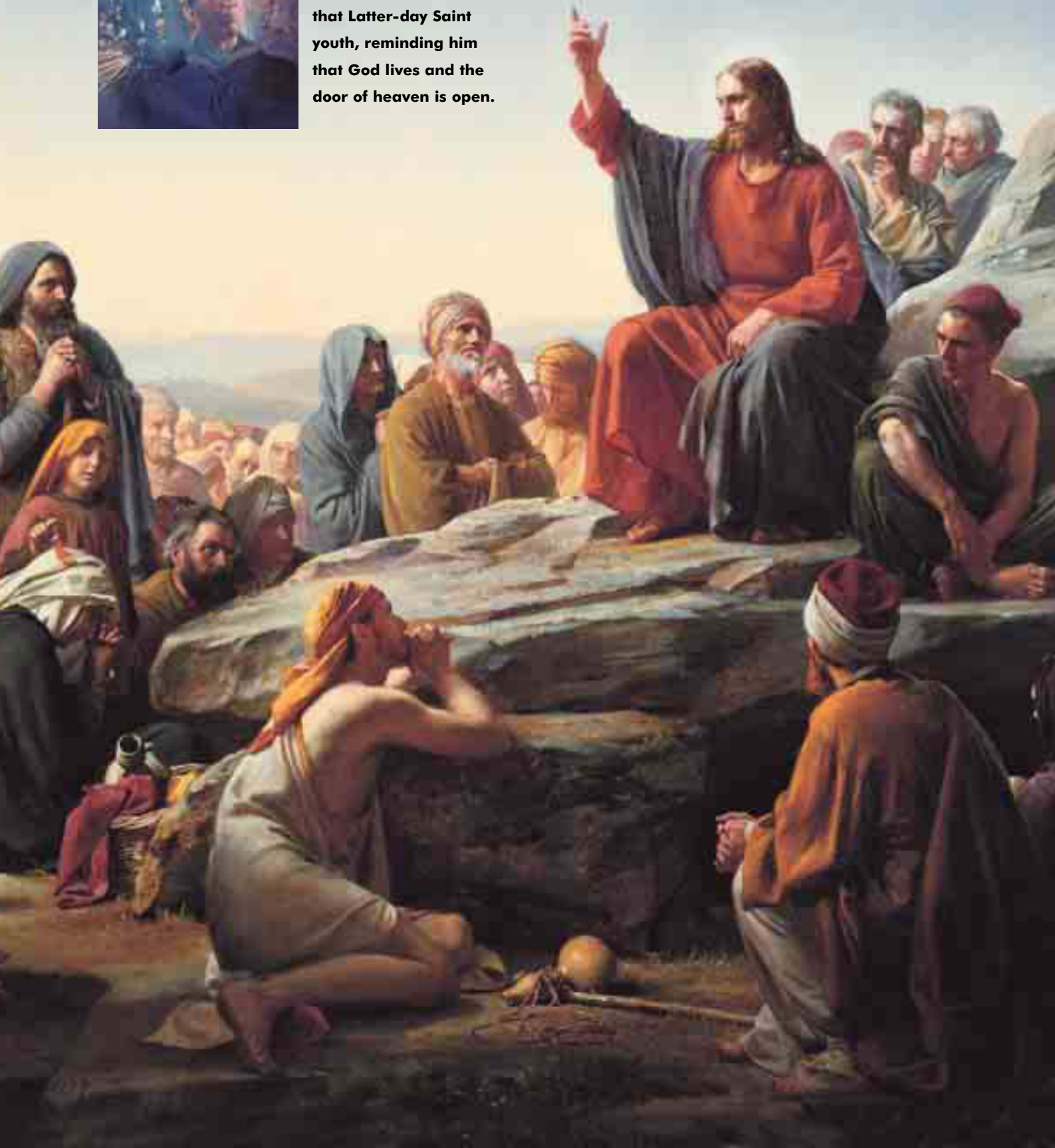
I was happy to receive the April 2001 *Liahona* (Spanish). I am grateful for the article "A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth" by President Gordon B. Hinckley. Some of my friends wear lots of rings in their ears and eyebrows. "But can I wear them?" I asked my branch president. He answered by showing me 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and President Hinckley's article.

Our leaders really love us. Their words in the Church magazines are a great help to youth. I know Heavenly Father sends people to keep us from being deceived.

Benny Jesús Doria Martínez,
Lorica Branch,
Montería Colombia District



That mental picture did it. The prayer of that little brother, of that family, brought clarity of mind and courage to that Latter-day Saint youth, reminding him that God lives and the door of heaven is open.



PILLARS OF TRUTH

By President Gordon B. Hinckley



It has been most interesting on occasion to contemplate the learning of my school days. So much learned then has been so very good, has helped me over the years. Habits and disciplines and much else that has blessed my life have come from those experiences.

Yet at times I have been compelled to reevaluate the learning of those days. Some matters, somewhat dogmatically set forth, have become almost fiction. In medicine, physics, and chemistry, some of the criteria have changed. In political science and law, attitudes have changed. In literature and art, there has been a shift in standards. Across that educational landscape there have been change and modification—everywhere except in the eternal truths of God.

Many centuries ago, one of the great prophets of what we call the Old Testament, the volume of scripture we are studying this year, gave counsel that is inspiringly applicable to the scene I have described: “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isaiah 40:8).

This condition has led me to consider pillars of eternal truth which can support and sustain us through all our years if we will heed them and conform our lives to their standards. I shall be brief in dealing with them. Each is worthy of a sermon.

God Lives, and the Door of Heaven Is Open. Of all the great and wonderful and inspiring promises I have read, the most reassuring to me are the words of the Savior: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7).

I recall a story of a Latter-day Saint boy in military service. He was the only Latter-day Saint in his barracks, and he soon wearied of the jibes of his associates. One day when the going was particularly rough, he finally agreed to go into town with the crowd. But as they entered the town, there came before his mind’s eye a picture. He saw the kitchen of his home. It was supper time. There was his family, kneeling at the kitchen chairs—his father, mother, two sisters, and a small brother. The little brother was praying, and he was asking our Heavenly Father to look after his brother in the military.

That mental picture did it. The young man turned away from the crowd. The prayer of that little brother, of that family, brought clarity of mind and courage to that Latter-day Saint youth.

Brothers and sisters, as we go forward in our lives, let us never forget to pray. God lives. He is near. He is real. He is our Father. He is accessible to us. He is the author of eternal truth, the Master of the universe. The handle is ready, and the door can be opened to His abundance. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God” (James 1:5).



The family is divine. It was instituted by our Heavenly Father. It encompasses the most sacred of all relationships. Only through its organization can the purposes of the Lord be fulfilled.



Life Is Forever. Almost 70 years ago, on a night in July, while serving as a young missionary, I looked out at Lake Windermere in England. This was the country of Wordsworth. As my eyes went from the lake to the sky in that quiet, lovely place, there passed through my mind the words penned there much earlier:

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

(William Wordsworth, "Ode on Intimations of Immortality")

We are not chance creations in a universe of disorder. We lived before we were born. We were God's sons and daughters who shouted for joy (see Job 38:7). We knew our Father; He planned our future. We graduated from that life and matriculated in this. The statement is simple; the implications are profound. Life is a mission, not just the sputtering of a candle between a chance

lighting and a gust of wind that blows it out forever.

Read again those marvelous accounts in Genesis, Moses, and the book of Abraham, and ponder the great order and planning that preceded our coming to earth for our mortal testing.

While here, we have learning to gain, work to do, service to give. We are here with a marvelous inheritance, a divine endowment. How different this world would be if every person realized that all of his or her actions have eternal consequences. How much more satisfying our years may be if in our accumulation of knowledge, in our relationships with others, in our business affairs, in our courtship and marriage, and in our family rearing, we recognize that we form each day the stuff of which eternity is made. Brothers and sisters, life is forever. Live each day as if you were going to live eternally, for you surely shall.

The Kingdom of God Is Here. We are citizens in the greatest kingdom on earth—a kingdom not directed by the wisdom of men but led by the Lord Jesus Christ. Its presence is real. Its destiny is certain. This is the kingdom of which the prophet Daniel spoke—a stone, as it were, that should be cut out of the mountain without hands and roll forth and fill the earth (see Daniel 2:34–35).

No mortal man created this kingdom. It came through revelation from its divine head. And since the 19th-century

days of its inception, it has gone forth like a rolling snowball gathering mass.

I love the prophetic words from the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, in which the Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) prayed to the Lord “that thy church may come forth out of the wilderness of darkness, and shine forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners; . . . that thy glory may fill the earth” (D&C 109:73–74).

Brethren, you who hold the priesthood in this great kingdom, I know of no better place to find fellowship and good friends than among the quorums of the Church. Where on earth should there be a better association than in a quorum, each of whose members is ordained to act in the name of the Lord, dedicated to help one another, and whose officers are set apart to this purpose under divine authority?

Brethren, the quorums of the Church need your talents, your loyalty, your devotion; and each man needs the fellowship and blessings that come of quorum activity in the kingdom of God.

Sisters, where will you find better association than in the Relief Society, whose motto is “Charity Never Fails” and whose mission is to bless the poor and bind up the wounds of the sick and the lonely, to bring gladness into the hearts of the women of the Church, and to increase their skill as homemakers?

Active membership in the Church is an anchor in the storms of life we all face. The kingdom is here. Cling to this truth.

The Family Is Divine. I remember listening to a man tell of his becoming active in the Church after years of being less active. The week previous he had been to the

temple. Now he was expressing his gratitude and said, “‘Until death do you part’ is a ceremony of marriage, but it is also a bill of divorcement.” The statement was not new with him, but it struck forcibly those who heard it and who knew the particulars of his story. It is true: a wedding ceremony under the law of the world unites in marriage and at the same time decrees its separation.

Yet the family is divine. It was instituted by our Heavenly Father. It encompasses the most sacred of all relationships. Only through its organization can the purposes of the Lord be fulfilled.

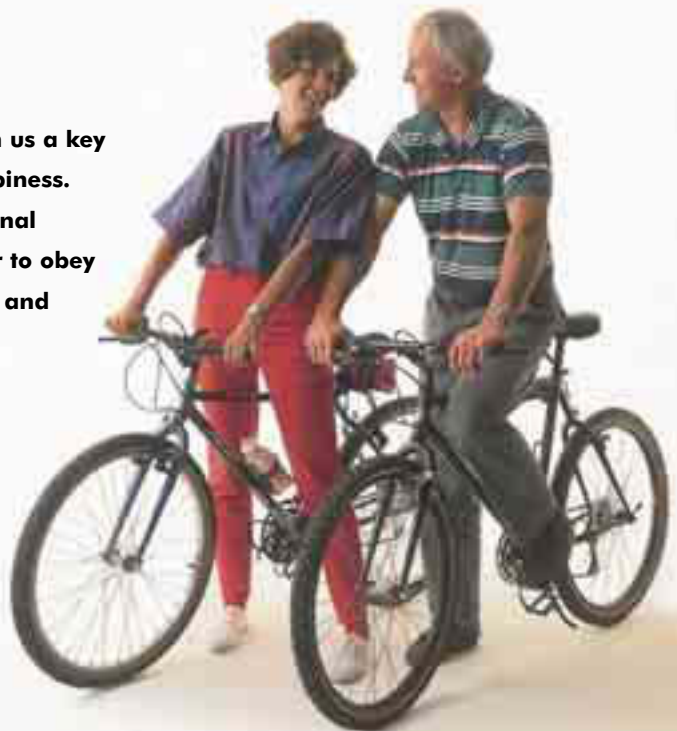
Thankfully, the Lord has given to His children the opportunity to be sealed in eternal marriage, in “a new and everlasting covenant; . . . a blessing . . . instituted from before the foundation of the world” (D&C 132:4–5).

Once you have gained this blessing, go forward with the assurance that death cannot break it—that only two forces in all the world can weaken and destroy that binding: sin and neglect.

Most marriages result in children, and most parents



The Lord has given us a key to health and happiness. It is a pillar of eternal wisdom. It is better to obey than to rationalize and sacrifice.



seek earnestly to raise righteous progeny. I am satisfied that nothing will ensure greater success in the hazardous undertaking of parenthood than a program of family life that comes from the marvelous teaching of the gospel: that the father of the home may be clothed with the priesthood of God; that it is his privilege and obligation as a steward of our Heavenly Father's children to provide for their needs; that he is to govern in the home in the spirit of the priesthood, "by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned" (D&C 121:41); that the mother in the home is a daughter of God, a soul of intelligence, devotion, and love who may be clothed with the Spirit of God; that it is her privilege and obligation as a steward of our Heavenly Father's children to nurture those children in their daily needs; that she, in companionship with her husband, is also to teach her children "to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and

of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands . . . [and] to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord" (D&C 68:25, 28).

In such a home, parents are loved and not dreaded; they are appreciated and not feared. And children are regarded as gifts of the Lord, to be cared for, nurtured, encouraged, and directed.

There may be an occasional disagreement; there may be small quarrels. But if there is prayer in the family and love and consideration, there will be a residue of affection that will bind forever and a loyalty that will always guide.

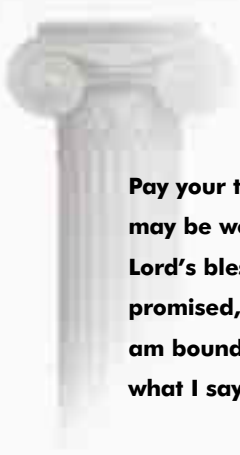
Obedience Is Better Than Sacrifice. You may recognize the source of that statement. It comes from the Old Testament prophet Samuel's counsel to Saul: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22). I am going to apply only one aspect of this great truth and will do so to the Lord's counsel and promise in matters of health, the Word of Wisdom (see D&C 89).

I remember a report from the American Medical Association to the effect that heavy smokers die seven years before they would if they did not smoke. Seven years of life. That's as long as many persons spend in high school and college. Seven years—time enough to become a doctor, an architect, an engineer, a lawyer. Seven years in which to enjoy the sunrise and the sunset, the hills and the valleys, the lakes and the seas, the love of our children, the friendship of wonderful people we may know. What a statistical promise confirming the word of the Lord that the destroying angel shall pass by those who walk in obedience and will not slay them (see verse 21).

Then there is that other promise—that they shall have "great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (verse 19). I think of an experience once told me by one of our Sunday School teachers. One Sunday while they were discussing the Word of Wisdom, someone asked what was meant by hidden treasures of knowledge.



**Get lost in the best
cause in the world, the
cause of the Lord—the
work of the quorums
and of the auxiliary
organizations,
temple work, welfare
service work,
missionary work.**



Pay your tithes that you may be worthy of the Lord's blessings. He has promised, "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say."



The teacher stuttered and stammered and was saved by the bell. He told the class that they would consider the matter the following Sunday.

During the week he pondered the question but felt that he could not come up with an answer. Near the end of the week, he had lunch with a colleague. The man told him that at one time while traveling, he found himself passing a Latter-day Saint Church building. He concluded to go in to see how the Latter-day Saints worshiped.

The man reported that it was a peculiar kind of service—that one after another stood up in the congregation, told of their experiences, expressed their gratitude, and then almost without exception testified that they knew that God lives, that Jesus Christ is His Son, our living Redeemer. The man drove up the highway that afternoon, saying to himself, *Surely these people have knowledge hidden from the world.*

Ponder that thought for a moment.

The Lord has given us a key to health and happiness—and has given it with a promise. It is a pillar of eternal wisdom. It is better to obey than to rationalize and sacrifice.

The Lord Is Bound. As I see the picture, three great desires govern the thinking of most people: (1) to love and be loved; (2) to have appreciative and good friends; (3) to

succeed—to secure and enjoy a measure of prosperity.

President Stephen L Richards (1879–1959) of the First Presidency told me once of a talk given by President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), he who was born in the dark days of Far West, who lost his father in the tragic days of Nauvoo, and who knew from firsthand experience the meaning of poverty. President Smith said, as I understand it, that the Lord did not intend that His people should live in poverty and misery and insecurity forever, that the Lord intended that they should appropriately enjoy the good things of the earth.

May I suggest that in my judgment, no person who is a member of this Church and has taken upon himself or herself the covenants incident to membership can reasonably expect the blessings of the Lord upon his or her efforts unless being willing to bear his or her share of the burden of the Lord's kingdom.

Brothers and sisters, the Lord, speaking through the Old Testament prophet Malachi, said:

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he

shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord” (Malachi 3:10–11).

Pay your tithes that you may be worthy of the Lord’s blessings. I will not promise that you will become wealthy. But I bear testimony that the Lord does reward generously in one way or another those who keep His commandments. And I assure you that no investment counselor to whom you may go can promise you as the Lord has promised, “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10). The Lord honors His covenants.

He That Loseth His Life Shall Find It. In 1933 when I left for my mission, I traveled through Chicago. The Great Depression was on. As we passed what I think was the Chicago Board of Trade Building, a woman said to the bus driver, “What building is that?” He replied, “That’s the Board of Trade Building. Nearly every day, some man whose stock has gone down jumps out of one of those windows.”

The bus driver may have exaggerated, but some people were jumping from windows in those days as they saw their fortunes dwindle. Their lives were wrapped up in themselves and their money, and they felt there was nothing worth living for when their money was gone.

It was Wendell Phillips who said, “How prudently most men creep into nameless graves, while now and then one or two forget themselves into immortality!” (quoted in John Wesley Hill, *Abraham Lincoln—Man of God* [1927], 146).

The Savior put it this way: “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 10:39).

While riding on an airplane, I picked up a magazine and read a description of the moral bankruptcy into which the world is falling. The author gave as the dominant reason for this decay an attitude that is

characterized by the question, What’s in it for me?

Brothers and sisters, you will never be happy if you go through life thinking only of yourself. Get lost in the best cause in the world, the cause of the Lord—the work of the quorums and of the auxiliary organizations, temple work, welfare service work, missionary work. You will bless your own life as you bless the lives of others.

And so I set before you these pillars of truth. Each is an eternal verity, proved out of the experience of generations, bearing the endorsement of the word of the Lord:

1. God lives, and the door of heaven is open.
2. Life is forever.
3. The kingdom of God is here.
4. The family is divine.
5. Obedience is better than sacrifice.
6. The Lord is bound.
7. He that loseth his life shall find it.

I bear testimony that in these truths lie peace that passeth understanding and joy unspeakable. □

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

1. God is real, He is our Father, and He is accessible to all through prayer.
2. We are not chance creations in a universe of disorder, but we are God’s children. We knew our Father, and He planned our future.
3. We are citizens in the greatest kingdom on earth—God’s kingdom. Active Church membership steadies us in life’s difficulties.
4. The family was instituted by our Heavenly Father. Only through the family can the Lord’s purposes be fulfilled.
5. It is better to obey than to rationalize and sacrifice.
6. The Lord generously rewards—in one way or another—all those who keep His commandments.
7. By forgetting our own selfish interests as we do the Lord’s work, our own lives are blessed.



OBTAINING BLESSINGS

By Elder Angel Abrea

Of the Seventy



The story is told of a traveler who asked a farmer, “How’s the cotton crop going to be this year?”

The farmer replied, “There won’t be any. I didn’t bother to plant it, because I was afraid of the boll weevil.”

Upon hearing this, the traveler asked further, “Well, are you going to harvest a big corn crop?”

“It’s the same,” came the response. “I was afraid we wouldn’t get enough rain for the kernels to mature.”

The traveler pursued, “At least you will have a good potato harvest.”

“Nope. I didn’t dare plant any, because I was afraid of insects.”

Somewhat frustrated, the traveler then asked, “Well, what is it that you have planted?”

“Nothing, my good man,” came the answer. “I’d rather be safe than sorry.”

Today there are many people who are just like that farmer. They hear the gospel but are afraid to find out if it is really true by planting it in their hearts and applying it to their lives.

We can pass through this mortal existence listening and following the words of the prophets and the scriptures, or we can be spectators afraid to apply these principles in our daily living.

A knowledge that the gospel is true comes from being “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22); it is the result of striving to “live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God” (D&C 84:44). There is no way that any of God’s children can be assured of blessings from the Most High without worthy actions in their lives. The Lord’s blessings are the fruits of obedience to the laws on which they are predicated. □

From an April 1988 general conference address.



By Elder L. Tom Perry

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

It is no surprise to the membership of the Church that General Authorities spend a great deal of time on airplanes.

The Church is now worldwide. Stake

centers dot the landscape of many nations.

Once while traveling, I entered into a discussion with an airplane pilot regarding what could happen if he deviated from his flight plan. His reply astonished me.

He said that for every one-degree variance from the plan, you would miss your charted destination by one

decreased visibility, and other limiting factors. The charted course would be so far away that it might be almost impossible to reach the intended destination. My visit with the pilot gave me no comfort, but it did cause me to think of how a flight plan parallels the direction we chart for our life's experience.

We are here in mortality experiencing a great adventure. We must chart our own course and follow the plan to determine our final destination. With our understanding of the gospel, our ultimate goal should be easy to determine, for the way has been marked for us by the Savior. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Savior said:

Learning

mile (1.6 kilometers) for every 60 miles (97 kilometers) you were flying. This means that in a flight from Salt Lake to Denver, you would land in downtown Denver rather than at the airport. On a flight from Salt Lake to Chicago, you would miss the airport and land in Lake Michigan. Going from Salt Lake to New York, you would miss Kennedy Airport and land in the Hudson River. Going to London, you wouldn't even make England—you would land somewhere in France.

A deviation from a flight plan of several degrees would take you totally off course. The pilot explained to me that, obviously, the faster the error is discovered, the easier it is to return to the flight plan. If the correction is delayed for a long time, it is very difficult to find the way back because of flight traffic, poor weather conditions,

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13–14).

Repeatedly the scriptures tell us there is only one course to eternal life. The Savior, in the upper room on the evening of the Last Supper, was bidding a tender farewell to His Apostles when He told them:

“In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2–3).

The Apostle Thomas then said, “Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?” (verse 5).

The Savior’s answer was simple and clear: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (verse 6).

How fortunate we are to know the Lord’s plan for us. He has marked the path which will lead us back to His presence. If the path is so clearly marked, why is it that so many deviate from it and do not correct their course, thus making it impossible to reach their hoped-for destination?

The road to exaltation and life with our Heavenly Father is strewn with hazards of various kinds. There are tribulations—some brief and others prolonged. Temptations lie in wait at curves, forks, and intersections. Whether or not we succumb to temptation and stray from our course is determined by how firmly we are committed to reaching our goal.

The Book of Mormon tells us about Lehi’s vision of the tree of life. By holding to a rod of iron, people were able to reach the tree and taste the fruit, which was sweet and most desirable above all other fruit. Lehi then reported:

to Serve



Gospel knowledge leads us to happiness found only in serving and sharing.

“I also cast my eyes round about, and beheld, on the other side of the river of water, a great and spacious building; and it stood as it were in the air, high above the earth.

“And it was filled with people, both old and young, both male and female; and their manner of dress was exceedingly fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who had come at and were partaking of the fruit.

“And after they had tasted of the fruit they were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost” (1 Nephi 8:26–28).

If we hope to arrive at the destination we seek on our journey through life, we must learn to ignore the jibes and ridicule of so-called friends. We need to turn a deaf ear to suggestions to follow the easier and more pleasant route pointed out by those who profess to know more than the Lord’s apostles and prophets.

As Nephi counseled: “Wherefore, I, Nephi, did exhort them to give heed unto the word of the Lord; yea, I did exhort them with all the energies of my soul, and with all the faculty which I possessed, that they would give heed

to the word of God and remember to keep his commandments always in all things” (1 Nephi 15:25).

One marker on the course to eternal life is the challenge displayed at the entrance of Brigham Young University: “Enter to learn. Go forth to serve.” To remain on course, we must first learn all we can about the strait and narrow way we must follow. The Lord has revealed the plan of life for His children to His prophets throughout the ages. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), twelfth President of the Church, counseled us:

“I am grateful that you and all of us have the gospel of Jesus Christ as a guide, so that we have a framework of understanding into which we can fit the events and circumstances that we will live to see. It is clear from the scriptures that we in this part of our dispensation cannot be promised by our political leaders that there will be ‘peace in our time,’ but we, as church members, are given the means of having a personal peace, of coming to know serenity in our souls—even when there is no peace without!

“By now you are perhaps accustomed to having those of us who are further along the pathway of life describe to you the importance of staying on the ‘strait and narrow’



There is only one course to eternal life. The Savior told His Apostles, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”



LEFT: IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME, BY WALTER RANE; LEFT INSET: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CRAIG DIMOND;
RIGHT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE BUNDERSON; RIGHT INSET: PHOTOGRAPH BY DON L. SEARLE

path. So often we say many of the same things to you again and again, but if you reflect upon why that is so, you will soon discover that the precipices that lie on each side of that narrow path don't change or become less dangerous; the steepness of that path does not change" (*President Kimball Speaks Out* [1981], 89).

Without waiting to find out the true meaning of life, many young people jump to conclusions and embark on their life journey unprepared. They follow the traffic without a road map, and not surprisingly, all they find along the way is disappointment. What do we need to learn before we go forth to serve?

LEARN FIRST ABOUT HIS WAYS

The scriptures tell us that it is impossible for man to be saved in ignorance (see D&C 131:6). This principle is greatly misunderstood. Elder John A. Widtsoe (1872–1952) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

wrote: "There are of course many kinds of knowledge; some of lesser, some of higher value. When Joseph Smith said that a man cannot be saved in ignorance, he meant naturally ignorance of the laws which all together lead to salvation. Such knowledge is of the highest value. It should be sought after first. Then other kinds of knowledge may be added to support and amplify the more direct knowledge of spiritual law. For example, it is a duty of the Church to preach the gospel to all the world. This however requires the aid of railroads, steamships, printing presses, and a multitude of other things that make up our civilization. A knowledge of the gospel is the missionary's



first need, but the other needs, though lesser, help him perform better the divine injunction to teach the gospel to all people” (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, arranged by G. Homer Durham [1987], 224).

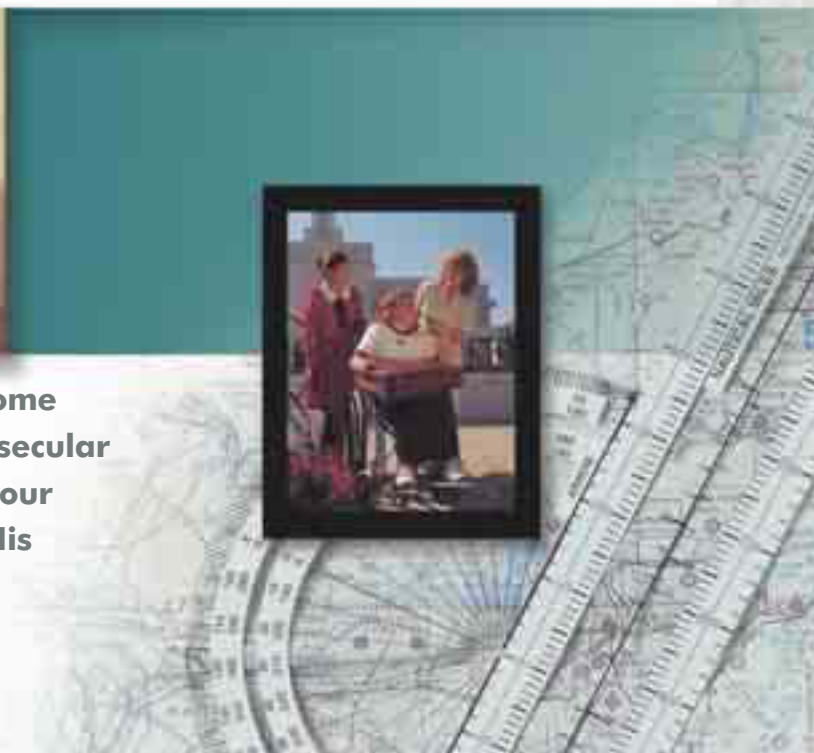
Of course, today some persons require knowledge about computers, satellite communications, and so on, but Elder Widtsoe’s point still holds. What he implied is that there must needs be an order to our learning, the same order indicated by the Savior’s teaching: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). Learning about sacred things should come first, providing a context and need for secular learning. If we want to return to our Heavenly Father’s presence, our first priority should be to learn about His ways and His plan.

The world would want to fool us into believing that there is insufficient time to engage in both spiritual and secular learning. I warn us not to be deceived by these philosophies of men. Our learning about sacred things will facilitate, even accelerate, our secular learning. President John Taylor (1808–87), third President of the Church, formulated “The Limitations of Secular

Hypotheses,” which states: “Man, by philosophy and the exercise of his natural intelligence, may gain an understanding, to some extent, of the laws of Nature. But to comprehend God, heavenly wisdom and intelligence are necessary. Earthly and heavenly philosophy are two different things, and it is folly for men to base their arguments upon earthly philosophy in trying to unravel the mysteries of the kingdom of God” (*The Gospel Kingdom*, selected by G. Homer Durham [1987], 73).

If we provide a spiritual foundation for our secular learning, not only will we better understand the laws of nature, but we can gain a depth of understanding never before imagined possible about art, languages, technology, medicine, law, and human behavior. We can see the world around us and understand it through God’s eyes.

The story of King Solomon teaches us that we can ask the Lord for understanding. When Solomon was in Gibeon, the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Ask what I shall give thee” (1 Kings 3:5). Solomon, feeling overwhelmed and underprepared for his new responsibilities as king, told the Lord, “I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in” (verse 7). Therefore, he asked the Lord for “an understanding



Learning about sacred things should come first, providing a context and need for secular learning. If we want to stay on course, our first priority should be to learn about His ways and His plan.

heart to judge” the people (verse 9). The Lord was pleased with Solomon’s request. He answered:

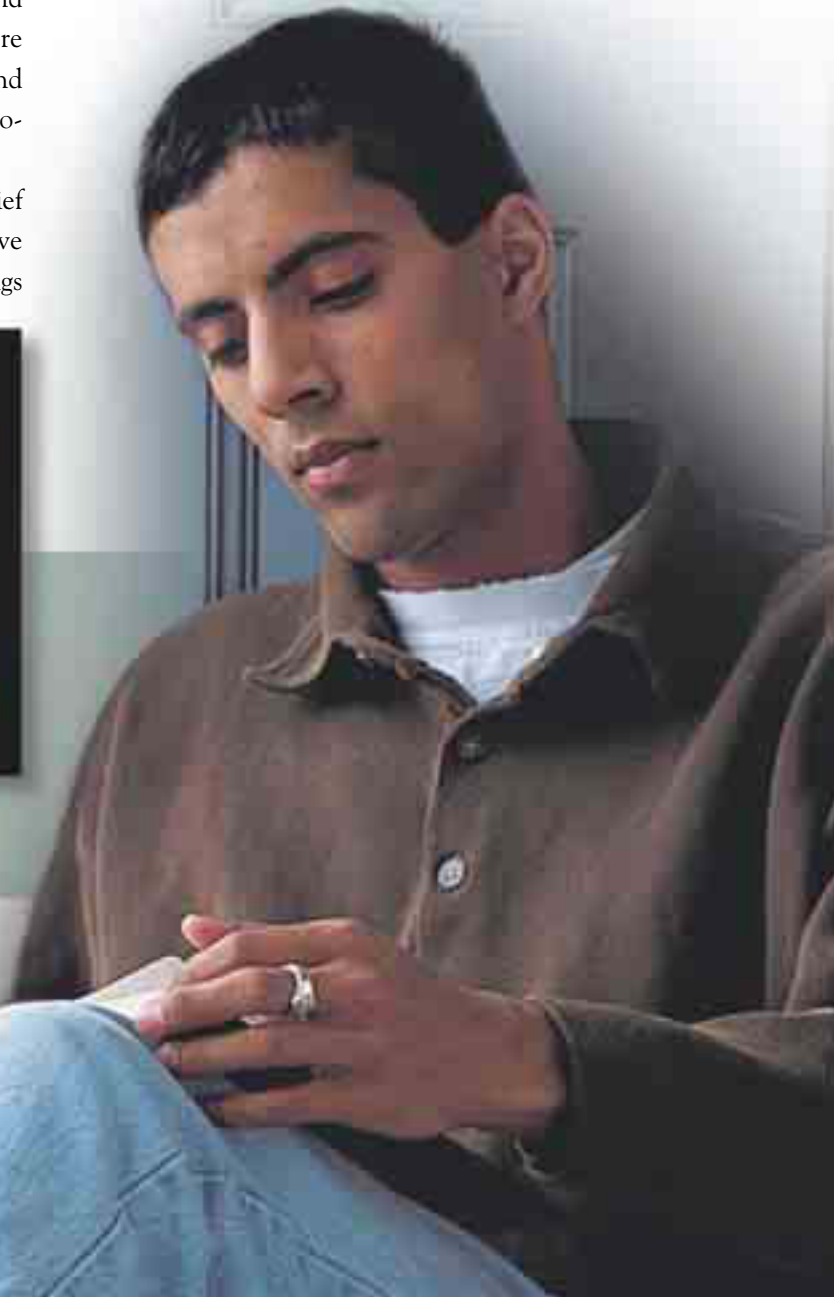
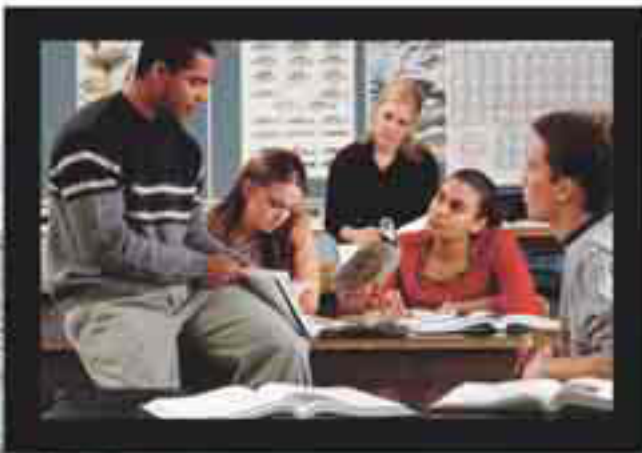
“Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

“Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee” (verses 11–12).

We should not underestimate the Lord’s power and His willingness to bless our lives if we ask with a sincere heart and real intent. He has instructional designs and learning theories that the world’s educational psychologists haven’t even imagined yet.

While the gift of mortal life offers a relatively brief period of time to learn of God and His ways, we have the eternities to learn of the universe and all the things

therein and to accumulate secular knowledge. President Kimball taught us that one of the blessings of exaltation is an infinite amount of time to learn about secular things. He said: “*After death we continue to learn.* Exaltation means godhood, creatorship. ‘As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may be.’ (Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography of Lorenzo Snow*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1884], p. 46.) This is in the future. It is obvious that before one can take of the materials in existence and develop them into a world like our own,



he must be master of geology, zoology, physiology, psychology, and all the others. It is obvious, also, that no soul can in his short mortal life acquire all this knowledge and master all these sciences, but he can make a beginning and with the foundation of spiritual life and controls and mastery, and with the authorities and powers received through the gospel of Christ, he is in a position to begin this almost limitless study of the secular” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, edited by Edward L. Kimball [1982], 53).

So let us never worry about the time it takes to learn of spiritual things. It is time well spent. It provides a foundation for secular learning. Indeed, the Lord will bless us if we trust in Him and learn about His eternal plan first. We are talking about a widening, not a narrowing, window of opportunity to learn if we attend to first things first.

President Kimball further stated:

“Now this mortal life is the time to prepare to meet God, which is our first responsibility. Having already obtained our bodies, which become the permanent tabernacles for our spirits through the eternities, now we are to train our bodies, our minds, and our spirits. Preeminent, then, is our using this life to perfect ourselves, to subjugate

the flesh, to subject the body to the spirit, to overcome all weaknesses, to govern self so that one may give leadership to others, and to perform all necessary ordinances. . . .

“ . . . After our feet are set firmly on the path to eternal life we can amass more knowledge of the secular things. . . .

“ . . . A highly trained scientist who is also a perfected man may create a world and people it, but a dissolute, unrepentant, unbelieving one will never be such a creator even in the eternities.

“Secular knowledge, important as it may be, can never save a soul nor open the celestial kingdom nor create a world nor make a man a god, but it can be most helpful to that man who, placing first things first, has found the way to eternal life and who can now bring into play all knowledge to be his tool and servant” (*President Kimball Speaks Out*, 90–92).

A SENSE OF INCURRED DEBT TO GOD

After we learn all we can about the course we must follow and have proceeded on the path to gain eternal life, we have an obligation to our Heavenly Father’s other children who need help. Gaining a knowledge of



King Benjamin counseled the people, “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.”



LEFT: KING BENJAMIN PREACHES TO THE NEPHITES. BY GARY L. KAPP. LEFT INSET: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CRAIG DIMOND. RIGHT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JED A. CLARK. RIGHT INSETS: PHOTOGRAPHY BY TONYA A. EVATT AND STEVE BUNDERSON

God's plan leads to many consequences, one of the more profound being an incredible sense of incurred debt to the God of this world, Jesus Christ. The plan of salvation balances on the need for a Redeemer. Jesus Christ performed this role. He atoned for our sins, and in the words of Isaiah and Peter, "with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5; see 1 Peter 2:24).

It is clear that the Apostle Paul felt deeply this sense of incurred debt when he wrote in his letter to the Romans, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). Paul identified a fundamental aspect of service. We serve out of a sense of gratitude to the Lord for the blessings He has provided us. Moreover, we must remember that the greatest blessing of all is that He suffered, bled, and died to fulfill the great plan of happi-

ness—a plan designed and executed for us, that we might return with Him into the presence of the Father. It was an understanding of this pivotal idea that led King Benjamin to say: "If ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants" (Mosiah 2:21).

How do we serve Him who made it possible for us to gain eternal life? Again, King Benjamin provided the answer when he counseled the people, "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17).

The Book of Mormon provides several examples of men who understood the fundamental equation that explains so much of our purpose in life, namely: Service



to others equals service to God. King Benjamin, of course, was one of the more profound examples of service to God and man. As he told his people, “Even I, myself, have labored with mine own hands that I might serve you” (Mosiah 2:14). King Benjamin chose to learn the plan of salvation; then he went forth and served.

Perhaps an even more dramatic example of how the spirit of service consumes those who learn and understand God’s plan is the story of Alma the Younger. We know that during Alma’s youth, he and the sons of Mosiah sought to destroy the Church of God. His actions were a full 180 degrees off the course he should have been following. Then a remarkable event occurred. An angel appeared to Alma and set him and his brethren straight.

Can you imagine Alma’s astonishment? He had devoted his life to destroying the Lord’s Church and the faith of the people, and then an angel appeared to tell him, “The Lord hath said: This is my church, and I will establish it; and nothing shall overthrow it, save it is the transgression of my people” (Mosiah 27:13).

Alma’s shock was so great that, literally, he was left speechless, and he could not move his hands. He was taken by those who were with him and laid before his father,

Alma, the chief high priest. The priests assembled themselves, fasted, and prayed for Alma for two days and nights so that his mouth might be opened and he might regain his strength. Their supplication to the Lord was finally answered when Alma the Younger stood before them a changed man and spoke to them, saying:

“My soul hath been redeemed from the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity. I was in the darkest abyss; but now I behold the marvelous light of God. My soul was racked with eternal torment; but I am snatched, and my soul is pained no more.

“I rejected my Redeemer, and denied that which had been spoken of by our fathers; but now that they may foresee that he will come, and that he remembereth every creature of his creating, he will make himself manifest unto all” (Mosiah 27:29–30).

It had been a painful course correction for Alma. He had suffered untold pain and eternal torment, but he was back on track. What the scriptures record next is most interesting.

“And now it came to pass that Alma began from this



A dramatic example of how the spirit of service consumes those who learn God’s plan is Alma the Younger. An angel told him, “The Lord hath said: This is my church, and I will establish it; and nothing shall overthrow it.”

time forward to teach the people, and those who were with Alma at the time the angel appeared unto them, traveling round about through all the land, publishing to all the people the things which they had heard and seen, and preaching the word of God in much tribulation, being greatly persecuted by those who were unbelievers, being smitten by many of them. . . .

“And they traveled throughout all the land of Zarahemla, and among all the people who were under the reign of king Mosiah, zealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done to the church, confessing all their sins, and publishing all the things which they had seen, and explaining the prophecies and the scriptures to all who desired to hear them.

“And thus they were instruments in the hands of God in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth, yea, to the knowledge of their Redeemer” (Mosiah 27:32, 35–36).

After conversion comes the responsibility and obligation to share the knowledge received with our Father in Heaven’s other children. Alma’s life was changed, and he became one of the greatest missionaries who ever lived. He taught with power and firsthand knowledge of the plan of redemption. He had learned at the feet of an angel; then he went forth and served.

We realize the extent of Alma’s conversion to the truth and his resulting desire to serve all God’s children when we read what he wrote near the end of his ministry:

“O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people!

“Yea, I would declare unto every soul, as with the voice of thunder, repentance and the plan of redemption, that they should repent and come unto our God, that there might not be more sorrow upon all the face of the earth” (Alma 29:1–2).

Alma had come to the point in his understanding of the plan of salvation and service to the Lord where he felt restrained by the limits of his physical body.

Although he realized his request was unreasonable, he wanted to do more. He wanted to proclaim the gospel with the voice of the angel who had proclaimed it to him. Feeling in a profound way his debt to the Lord, he wanted to sacrifice more than even all he had to the Lord’s service.

Some among us preach the doctrine of “me-ism.” They declare that we should think of ourselves first and foremost and above all else. History, however, has taught that selfishness has never brought happiness. An important part of life is serving and sharing. Certainly the soul-satisfying joy of life is leaving a legacy of love and service for others to emulate and enjoy. Bryant S. Hinckley, father of President Gordon B. Hinckley, said this about service:

“Service is the virtue that distinguished the great of all times and which they will be remembered by. It places a mark of nobility upon its disciples. It is the dividing line which separates the two great groups of the world—those who help and those who hinder, those who lift and those who lean, those who contribute and those who only consume. How much better it is to give than to receive. Service in any form is comely and beautiful. To give encouragement, to impart sympathy, to show interest, to banish fear, to build self-confidence and awaken hope in the hearts of others—in short, to love them and to show it—is to render the most precious service” (quoted in Steven R. Covey and others, *First Things First* [1994], 306; punctuation modified).

Entering this earth life to learn and then going forth to serve represent the purpose of our mortal existence. If our actions deviate from that purpose, let us make a quick course correction and return to the proper path. Let us commit to spending time each day, each week, each year to make sure that the course we are on is the one charted by the Lord Himself, the strait and narrow path leading to the only destination that will give us lasting peace and joy—that of eternal life. □

Standing

Pia Hentsen



Annelise Nielsen



Rebecca Pedersen

Tall in Denmark

By Laury Livsey

PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE AUTHOR

Three young women in Copenhagen, Denmark, tell three very different stories. Pia tells about her conversion, Rebecca tells about an antipornography program she is involved in, and Annelise tells about fasting and praying that the government will allow the Church to build a new chapel. These three stories have at least one thing in common. All are about Church members standing tall in Denmark.

PIA HENTSEN

Pia is a 16-year-old Laurel in the Frederiksberg Ward, Copenhagen Denmark Stake. Her mom is a lifelong member of the Church and Pia can remember going to Primary when she was younger, but Pia has been a Church member for only one year.

“My mom and dad are Church members, so when I was young, I went to Primary. But I never was baptized,” Pia says.

After her parents divorced, Pia, her two brothers, and their mother stopped going to church. Pia turned 8 but wasn't baptized. She turned 12

and didn't attend Young Women. For about 10 years there was little Church involvement in her life. Home teachers still came and visiting teachers called on her mom, but the Hentsens stayed home on Sundays.

Then a Young Women leader called Pia and invited her to start attending activities. “My leader wrote letters inviting me to go to church. I went once but thought it was boring and didn't want to go back. But the missionaries changed my mind about church,” she says, laughing.

The missionaries knew Pia had never been baptized, so they scheduled a time to visit her. At that first appointment, they brought a short spiritual message. That pattern continued for several weeks until one day they tried something different, bringing with them something every missionary has to offer—the first discussion.

“They asked if they could give me the first discussion, and I said, ‘OK.’ It didn't take long—probably a few weeks—before I finished all the discussions and agreed to be baptized.” About this same time, Pia's mother started



CENTRAL STATION IN COPENHAGEN



On Copenhagen's waterfront, Pia and her mom smile, grateful to be active in the Church again.

But the work—stuffing envelopes with antipornography literature—is tedious and time consuming.

As she addresses the envelopes, she talks of her involvement with a program organized to protest pornography in Denmark.

“Pornography has such a large effect on our values, but Denmark is

becoming active again, as did her two brothers.

Today, in the small group that makes up the Young Men and Young Women program of the Frederiksberg Ward, Pia is at home. Joining the Church and being active took some getting used to. Now it’s a way of life. “I’m the only Laurel in the ward. We also have two Mia Maids and two Beehives. That’s our Young Women,” she says. Then she stops and thinks seriously about how the Church has changed her life. “I think my life is better now,” she concludes. “I have something I know is true.”

REBECCA PEDERSEN

Sheets of postage stamps wait to be affixed to a pile of envelopes. But Rebecca is only one person. A Laurel in the Allerød Ward, Copenhagen Denmark Stake, Rebecca has a few thoughts about pornography and its damaging influence, and she’s doing something about it.

Rebecca decided to take a stand against pornography in Denmark. “I think a lot of people out there hate pornography and its effects. But many people are not willing to do or say anything,” she says.

quite a liberal country and I can see that people almost get used to the pornography. But instead of getting used to it, we should be startled by it,” Rebecca says.

At Rebecca’s school, a fellow student started a protest against pornography and enlisted Rebecca’s help. These students gathered signatures for a petition they hope will gain them a voice with the government—especially with Denmark’s minister of culture, who oversees public television in the country.



“We can’t stop people from looking at pornography,” Rebecca explains, “but we would like to see pornography removed from public places where children can easily see it. You can’t just put children to bed early and expect them not to see those things on television.”

As she thinks about the Young Women values and considers what she represents as a member of the Church, Rebecca is glad to be involved in something she hopes will effect a change.

“You have to make a statement in your life. I think it’s important for us, especially as members of the Church, to do something to make the world a better place,” she says. “That thought has always been important to me, but a couple of months ago when I received my patriarchal blessing, I realized even more that I had to do something.”

When Rebecca’s group completed the project and sent the petition to the government, she allowed herself to think about the small part she played in getting more than 22,000 people to sign the petition and how the project strengthened her resolve to make Denmark a better place. She also smiles. Her group easily exceeded their goal of 15,000 signatures.

Rebecca knows things are not going to change overnight. But you have to start somewhere, right? “I think a lot of people out there hate pornography and its effects,” she says. “But many people are not willing to do or say anything. Sometimes I think people just need a little reminder once in a while.”

ANNELISE NIELSEN

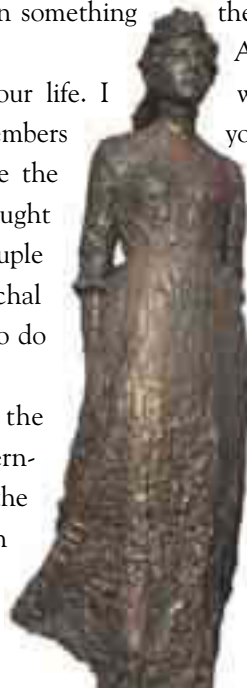
Annelise is a third-generation Church member. Her grandma and grandpa were baptized many years ago, her dad grew up in the Church and married a member, and Annelise is a lifelong member. She is now a member of the Frederiksberg Ward, and Annelise, a Beehive, is, along with Pia, one of the few young women in the ward.

The ward currently meets in a rented building. The elevator in the building is pretty slow, so Annelise takes the stairs. Three flights of stairs get her to the top floor, where she enters the chapel. The building is clean and nice, but Annelise says there is a temporary feeling about where the Frederiksberg Ward meets. She looks out the window of the chapel and points.

“That’s our old chapel right there,” she says. She’s looking at a beautiful brick building one block away, the first the Church built in this country. And it sits empty—for good reason.

“That is where our temple is going to be,” Annelise explains.

The temple in Copenhagen will serve the members in Denmark and other parts of Scandinavia. Having a temple 10 minutes from her house instead of the 12 hours it takes to get to the Stockholm



Pia, Rebecca, and Annelise are part of a long gospel tradition. The statue *Kristina*, by Dennis Smith, memorializes the many 19th-century Danish converts who sacrificed to build the kingdom.

DOWNTOWN COPENHAGEN



THE GROUNDS OF FREDERIKSBORG CASTLE IN HILLERØD, DENMARK



The members of the Frederiksberg Ward—including Annelise; Sister Kristel Pedersen; and Annelise’s sister, Christel—fasted and prayed for a new place to meet in.

Sweden Temple is a real blessing. Annelise knows it is worth the sacrifice.

But there is still the issue of a new meetinghouse. The lease on the temporary building will expire soon. So this Sunday, the Frederiksberg Ward is holding a fast, praying that the government will give the Church approval to build on property it has purchased. Annelise is joining other ward members in fasting and praying for this special purpose.

This morning Annelise admits she’s hungry. “But when I fast I feel close to God and I feel more humble,” she says. “I don’t feel fasting is that much of a sacrifice, and I believe if everybody in this ward prays for the same thing, then our Heavenly Father will help us.”

After sacrament meeting, with her fast almost complete, Annelise doesn’t dash home to eat. Instead, she walks out the door holding the arm of Kristel Pedersen, a 96-year-old ward member. Sister Pedersen joined the Church in 1958 and taught Annelise’s father in Sunday School. Each month Annelise gets to know her better by taking some time to visit with her.

“Sister Pedersen is nice to talk with. I think she is a

strong woman because she is the only member of the Church in her family. Her husband never joined, and her children were already grown when she was baptized,” Annelise explains. “She is 96 years old, and she still comes to church each Sunday.

“I admire people like Sister Pedersen who are close to Heavenly Father,” Annelise adds. “And when I do things like fasting, it brings me closer to Him too.”

In Copenhagen stands the original, well-known statue of Jesus Christ, the *Christus*, created by Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen. In that same city, Latter-day Saints also stand tall, emulating the Savior in all they do. □

Editor’s note: A few months after Annelise and others fasted, the Church received government approval to construct a new building for the Frederiksberg Ward.

DOWNTOWN COPENHAGEN



DENMARK'S EAST COAST

LIVING AS WOMEN OF VIRTUE

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

Proverbs 31:10: “Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.”

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency: “Virtue has many definitions, such as moral excellence, right action and thinking, goodness of character, or chastity” (“How Near to the Angels,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 95).

WHAT VIRTUES ARE IMPORTANT FOR US TO CULTIVATE?

Philippians 4:8: “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “I feel to invite women everywhere to rise to the great potential within you. I do not ask that you reach beyond your capacity. I hope you will not nag yourselves with thoughts of failure. . . . I hope you will simply do what you can do in the best way you

know. If you do so, you will witness miracles come to pass” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 696).

Margaret D. Nadauld, Young Women general president: “The world has enough women who are tough; we need women who are tender. . . . There are enough women who are rude; we need women who are refined. We have enough women of fame and fortune; we need more women of faith. We have enough greed; we need more goodness. We have enough vanity; we need more virtue. We have enough popularity; we need more purity” (“The Joy of Womanhood,” *Liahona*, January 2001, 18).

HOW CAN WE BEST TEACH THESE VIRTUES?

D&C 46:33: “Ye must practise virtue and holiness before me continually.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “We cannot hope to influence others in the direction of virtue unless we live lives of virtue. The example of our living will carry a greater influence than will all the preaching in which we might indulge. We cannot expect to lift others unless we stand on higher ground ourselves. . . . The home is the cradle of virtue, the place where character is formed and habits are

established” (“Opposing Evil,” *Ensign*, November 1975, 38–39).

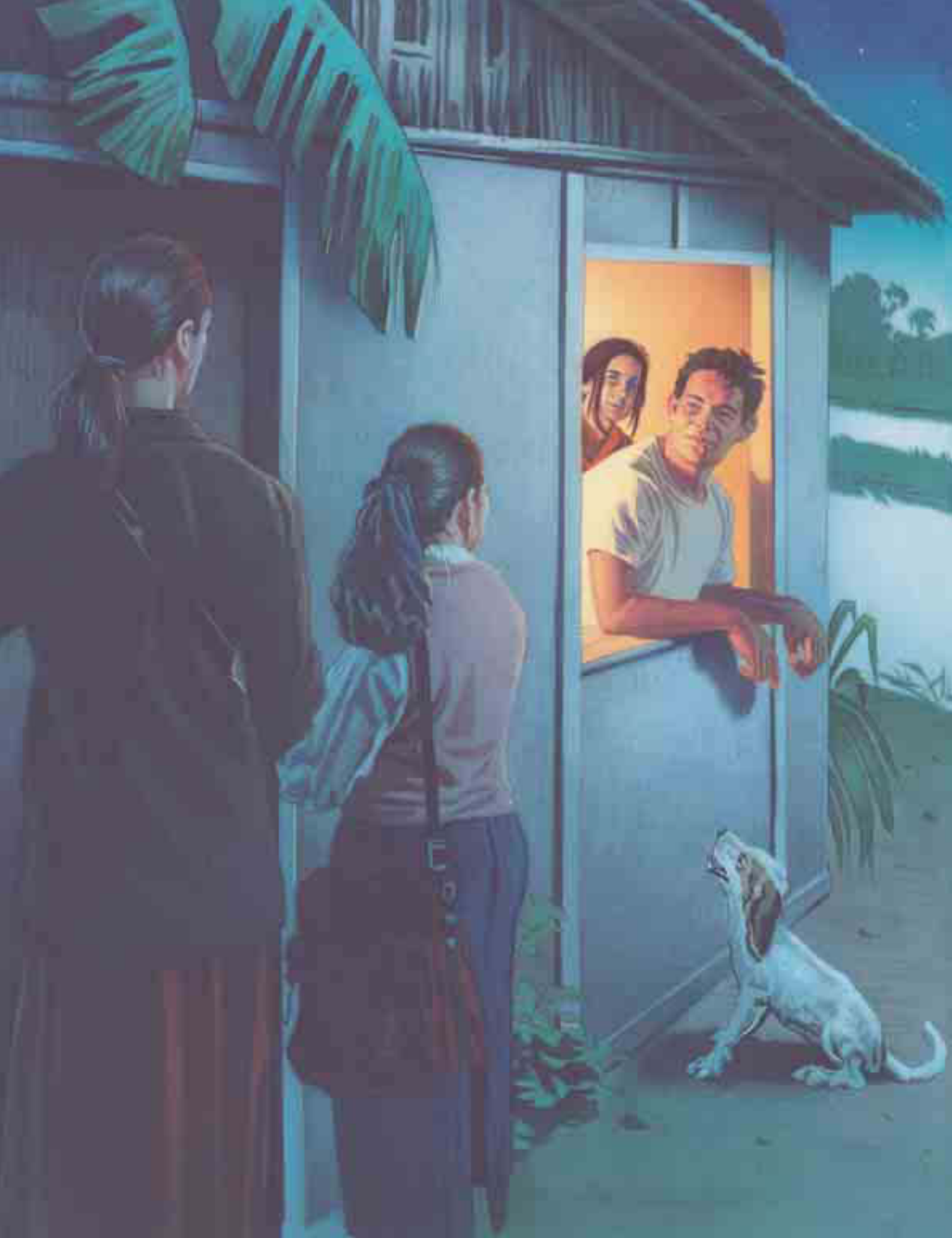
WHAT ARE THE PROMISED BLESSINGS OF LIVING A LIFE OF VIRTUE?

D&C 121:45: “Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God.”

D&C 25:2: “If thou art faithful and walk in the paths of virtue before me, I will preserve thy life, and thou shalt receive an inheritance in Zion.”

President James E. Faust: “The Prophet Joseph . . . said, ‘If you live up to your privileges, the angels cannot be restrained from being your associates.’ . . . Hold your soul very still, and listen to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. Follow the noble, intuitive feelings planted deep within your souls by Deity in the previous world” (*Ensign*, May 1998, 97). □





On My Way



I thought it was just a broken brake, but it was really the beginning of a journey of much happiness.

By Ravenal P. Solomon

In October 1980 I was riding my bicycle when I suddenly realized my foot brake was not working. I panicked, not knowing when or how I would be able to stop. When my wild ride ended and I finally coasted safely to a stop, I ended up next to Rodico Flores, a good friend and high school classmate. I explained what had happened, and then we chatted for a little while. During our conversation, he asked if I had time to come to his church. Since I knew he was a good person and I admired the other Latter-day Saints I knew, I decided to go the next Sunday.

On Sunday I noticed that the building his church met in was clean and beautiful. I felt something different there. I was met by a person who shook my hand and even put his arm around me, telling me he was happy to see me. I felt good, even though I was a bit shy and nervous. This brother took me to a class for investigators.

After the lesson two young women introduced themselves as full-time missionaries. They asked if they could visit me at my home. I quickly told them I was busy and started giving them excuses. But they still asked me to tell them when I was available, and I responded that I was available early Monday morning. I said they could come but only if they wanted to come at 4:00 A.M.

To my surprise, they looked at each other and said, "Brother Solomon, we will be there." Then I insisted that it was hard to reach my family's house, that it was located in the middle of a fishpond, that we had a lot of dogs. I told them they would have a hard time getting there. But they said again, "Brother Solomon, we will be there." After I left, I forgot all about our appointment because I didn't believe they would be coming.

Early Monday morning I was surprised to hear the dogs barking and a voice calling, "Brother Solomon! Brother Solomon!" I looked out the window, and I started to feel differently about the missionaries. I felt a confirmation that they were true servants of God. I invited them in and listened to their message. After a while I told them to come every

day with a lesson, which they did. They taught me until I was prepared for baptism.

Just after my baptism on 31 October 1980, a friend invited me to a ward party. I said to myself, *This Church is nice; they even throw a party for me.* I later realized I wasn't really the guest of honor. But at the party my friend introduced me to a young woman and told her to take good care of me. Annie Ortiz was indeed a good fellowshipping. At this time, she is still taking good care of me. We were married in 1985 and sealed in the Manila Philippines Temple.

Since my baptism, I have grown in the gospel as I have been given opportunities to serve. In 1983 I was called to serve full time in the Philippines Davao Mission, and four months after my marriage I was called as a bishop. I also served as a stake president and in a mission presidency. My wife and I are happily married and have two children, Ezra and Brigham, and we are looking forward to a lifetime of service.

I am grateful for the happiness I have found in the Church, for the dedicated missionaries who persevered, and for the broken bicycle brake that actually helped send me on my way. □

Ravenal P. Solomon is a member of the Dagupan First Ward, Dagupan Philippines Stake.

When Life Gets Tough

It was 1962, and I was 19. I had been called to serve a mission in México when I learned I had cancer.

By Elder John B. Dickson

Of the Seventy



Cancer? Me? I thought only people in big cities got cancer. After biopsies and close examinations by competent specialists, I learned the problem I was having with the swelling in my right forearm was an osteogenic sarcoma. Translated, it meant I had a type of bone cancer which, in those days, was nearly always fatal, even with the amputation of the affected limb.

Fatal! I was 19; having something fatal had never crossed my mind. I was excited to serve my mission, marry in the temple, have a great family, and enjoy a wonderful life. Still I loved the Lord, and I knew He loved me. Whether He allowed me to remain here or leave this life, it would be OK.

The immediate outcome was the loss of my right arm. The extended outcome has proven to be a lifetime of adventure. As I look back, I can honestly say the loss of my arm, rather than being a tragic experience, has been one of my greatest blessings. I have learned and gained so much from it.

The adjustment was interesting. I had been working in logging and road-building operations in the Pacific Northwest woods, so my body was strong. But I was extremely right-handed, and that greatly-dependend-upon arm was truly missed. Although I could formerly throw a baseball farther than anyone on the team, with my left arm I could throw a ball only a short distance. Writing was really interesting. My penmanship could have been improved on by almost any preschool child. Everything was a challenge: tying shoes, buttoning shirts, carrying large objects, driving, shaving, drawing, eating, being stared at, enduring phantom pain, and so on.

Very quickly I came to realize I had much to get used to, to learn, and to relearn. I also realized there was very little I could do about the fact that I had only one arm, and my attitude about that fact—and in life in general—was totally up to me. I was at a crossroads. It was apparent I could cry if I wanted to, or I could handle this and all other challenges with faith and a positive attitude. My happiness and eternal well-being were dependent upon my choice.

The decision was simple. I chose to be positive, creative, very active, and to do everything possible to fulfill my destiny as a son of God, sent to grow from an earthly experience. Once made, this choice was firm and I never looked back.

The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) experienced many challenges and much suffering as he languished in the Liberty Jail. Concerned for the well-being of the Saints and his family in the wilderness, while his own physical condition was very bad, he pleaded with the Lord to know why all of these things were happening when he felt he had understood the process of the Restoration and the establishment of Zion so well. The Lord gave an answer that we can all benefit from during our own mortal experience with so many challenges: “Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:7).

As I was learning from my own true-life experience, I stood alone in my bedroom a few days after the operation, preparing to go to church. I held a tie in my hand and thought, *Now what am I going to do with this silly*

tie? I thought about having my mother help me but soon rejected the idea, knowing she couldn't go on my mission to tie my ties and otherwise care for me. I simply had to fend for myself. With patience, I tied my tie, and although I used my teeth a little, I learned I could do it and do it well. That day a window was opened to my mind, and I could clearly see that with patience, faith, and determination, I would be able to handle almost any challenge I would face.

Over time I realized that same faith, determination, and positive attitude could help anyone through the various tough challenges of life. My own story has to do with a physical problem, but we humans face all kinds of other challenges as well.

The Lord told the Prophet Joseph, "Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good."



ILLUSTRATION BY SAM LAWLOR; JOSEPH SMITH IN LIBERTY JAIL BY GREG K. OLSEN

Those challenges may be about finances, problems in a family relationship, getting an education, feelings of rejection, loss of a loved one, or being misunderstood. The challenges for youth often have to do with temptations regarding the Word of Wisdom, inappropriate language, moral purity, inappropriate entertainment, or Internet viewing.

Let me share four principles that might be helpful to you.

1. KNOW YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

Make sure you know of your relationship with your Father in Heaven and the Savior. In other words, make sure you know who you are. Your testimony of the plan of happiness your Heavenly Father has prepared for you will

help you understand your eternal destiny and will help you with your determination to succeed on life's journey. The reason for having and keeping commandments becomes very clear to each of us when we understand what the Lord wants us to become. Make sure you understand the plan of salvation and that your testimony of the gospel is solid.

A testimony of such important matters isn't free, but it will increase as you pray daily with faith, read the scriptures, and partake of the sacrament worthily each Sunday.

2. DECIDE NOW

Decide now how you will act when peer pressure and temptation arise. At about age 12, I made a personal decision to always keep the Word of Wisdom. Over the years, there were invitations to break that commandment, but the answer "No!" was always kind, quick, and

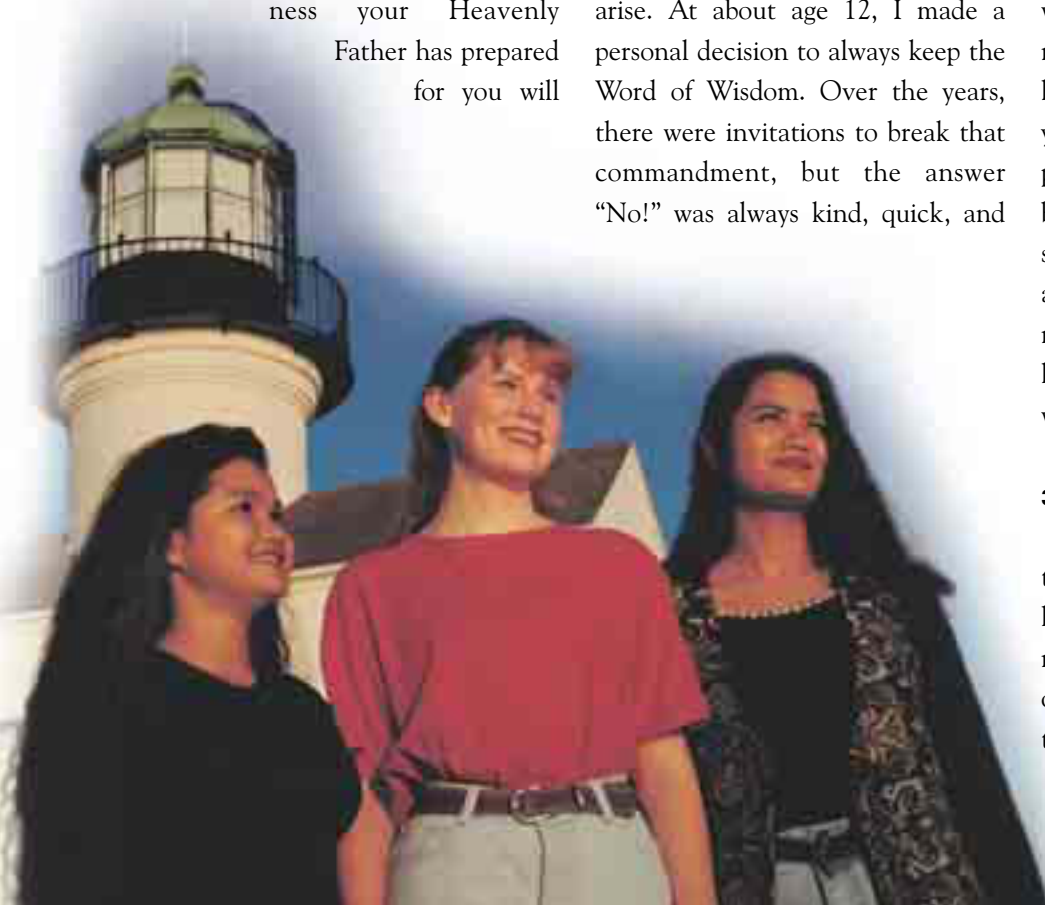
effective. Because I had determined beforehand how I would react when invited, I never felt threatened with the possibility of a bad decision under pressure from my friends.

Nothing is lost with a good decision. Remember, if you haven't already made up your mind before destructive invitations or temptations present themselves, the probability of making the wrong decision is many times greater.

I am very aware that some of you have not done as I am suggesting and have already fallen into serious errors. Possibly only you or another person or two are aware of these mistakes, yet they are an embarrassment to your soul. Although you want to be right with the Lord, you may not know where to turn and how to fix the problem. I suggest you talk to the Lord in sincere prayer, explain the matter to the bishop or branch president, and speak with your parents. You may anticipate criticism or embarrassment, but I believe you will find love, support, and a wonderful window of opportunity.

3. DON'T POSTPONE REPENTANCE

Make sure you are not drawn into thinking the way is easy and you can live by the standards of the world and, no matter what, the Lord will bail you out—so you can postpone repentance. Please do not fall into the trap



We truly matter to our Heavenly Father, and He loves us and wants us back. At the same time, He wants us to be clean and to learn and to grow from our experiences.

mentioned by Nephi: “And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God” (2 Nephi 28:8).

The Lord wants us to return to Him, but we cannot return and also embrace the sins and stains of the world. He wants us to be true disciples who are committed to working to be like Him. It requires work and discipline to enjoy the blessings He wants to share with us. When we repent and do our best, the Lord, in His mercy, can help us to be clean.

4. KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS

Make sure the Spirit is with you each day as you move through life. The next time you partake of the sacrament, listen closely to the words of the prayers, and you’ll hear a very special promise to those who keep the commandments. It is that they will “always have his Spirit to

be with them” (Moroni 4:3). What a blessing the commandments are.

Some think the commandments are meant to restrain or restrict us. In reality, they have been given simply to help us become more like our loving Father, who wants to share incredible eternal blessings with His faithful sons and daughters. He invites us to avoid and not participate in things that wouldn’t belong in a lifestyle He desperately wants to share with us.

A couple of years ago as Sister Dickson and I arrived at the Provo Missionary Training Center to speak with the missionaries, the MTC president asked if I would tie my tie for the missionaries to help them understand that they could handle the challenges that come with missionary service. I considered his request and adjusted my talk to cover some of what has been mentioned in this article.

As I was about to conclude, I invited four missionaries in the front to come forward for a little race at tie tying. One asked if they should use just their left hand, but I suggested they would need both hands. As you can imagine, the missionaries were quite excited when I won.

This article, however, really has



little to do with being the fastest tie tier, the best quarterback, cheerleader, or hamburger-eating champion. It simply has to do with knowing who we are, that we truly matter to our Heavenly Father, and that He loves us and wants us back. At the same time, He wants us to be clean and to learn and to grow from our experiences.

Over the years I have handled many challenges in my life, as you will in yours. During the time between those interesting adventures, life has been restful and easy. But any true personal growth has always come when I was working my way through one of life’s challenges. As challenges come, we must look at them as stepping-stones in our development rather than barriers to stop our progress. Come they will, and we must simply win and move on. □

“THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS HERE”



We are citizens in the greatest kingdom on earth,” says President Gordon B. Hinckley, “a kingdom not directed by the wisdom of men but led by the Lord Jesus Christ. Its presence is real. Its destiny is certain” (see this issue, page 4). ♡ In this month’s First Presidency Message, President Hinckley identifies seven pillars of truth, eternal verities that do not change

as the world shifts its beliefs and values. One of these pillars is “the kingdom of God is here.” This simple and fundamental truth confronts every soul who comes in contact with the Church and sincerely desires to discover its truth. As the following stories illustrate, this pillar of truth does not change, but as men and women gain a testimony of it, their hearts and lives do.

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A Wonderful Gift for Me

By Stefania Postiglione

I have been asked many times why I joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and I have always told the story of meeting the missionaries at the house of a dear friend who had just been baptized. But with the passage of time, I have realized that before that first meeting many things prepared me to accept the gospel.

I was an active and energetic young woman, and my life was

divided between spending time with friends and working out at the gym. Nothing else interested me. I had a passion for martial arts. I *lived* for the sport; it had become a way of life for me. In effect, it was my religion. I was very good and had acquired much skill. My pride increased as I became more and more recognized by others, especially since I was a woman in a sport dominated by men.

As time passed, I began to feel an unsettling sensation after each day’s workout. Often I felt out of breath, and my heart would race.

I soon learned that the continuous pressure of such a strenuous sport had aggravated a genetic predisposition toward irregular heartbeats. The pain intensified, and sometimes I could not even stand. Almost overnight I lost my self-sufficiency. A series of unfortunate medical decisions



I had a passion for martial arts. But the strenuous workouts aggravated a predisposition toward irregular heartbeats. My suffering led me to search for something more.

worsened my condition, and twice I came close to cardiac arrest.

Over a period of five years, I had two operations and made many visits to doctors and hospitals. Eventually I needed constant care from my parents.

While in the hospital I saw much suffering and pain, and I learned the necessity of loving others. I began to understand what was really important in life.

My soul had been changed, and I felt that someone was giving me a second chance at life. I started to wonder about God, who until then, I believed, had played no part in my life. I began to study various religions, and I was impressed by their common denominator of love. Then a friend told me about the missionaries who had brought her such happiness. I met with them and was baptized one month later.

Now I am thankful that I suffered, because suffering opened the way for me to hear the gospel. God truly has unusual ways of preparing His children.

Since accepting the gospel, I have had the privilege of sharing the truth with others. I have also been to the temple and have been greatly blessed. I am thankful to God to be able to work for Him. His gospel is truly a wonderful gift for me.

Stefania Postiglione is a member of the Flegreo Branch, Naples Italy District.

I Refused to Hear

By Isabel Berrios

I have always had faith in our Father in Heaven and in Jesus Christ. But the Church was another matter for me. I believed it was like any other church; it was one church among many capable of leading me to salvation.

Why then was I a member? I had been searching for a church that fit my religious principles. When I found The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I knew I had found a “good religion,” one espousing doctrine I already believed from my study of the Bible. That knowledge was enough for me, I decided.

But as I attended church and listened to talks and testimonies, a desire began to grow in me to discover for myself if the Church actually was the restored Church of Jesus Christ—the only true Church upon the earth. I decided to read the Book of Mormon—something I had not done before. I realized, of course, from reading the Church magazines that I would not gain a testimony if I did not study with faith and a heart open to receiving a witness from our Heavenly Father. And so I studied, and I received a witness that the Book of Mormon is true.

Yet I still had doubts about the Church. I wanted a clear and definite affirmation from God, something remarkable that would make me feel

sure. I knew I should not ask for a sign, but the thought dominated my mind and likely kept me from receiving the testimony I sought. The more I sought a confirmation in this way, the more rebellious I felt. Then I began to lose hope.

One day during an institute class, the teacher presented a video portraying a person much like myself—one who was not sure of his testimony. He sought counsel from his bishop, and the bishop explained that our Father in Heaven looks for moments to answer our prayers, but we must be attentive and receptive to the Holy Ghost. The bishop in the video also said that learning to recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit requires time and a humble heart.

These words touched me deeply. I recognized that I had never listened to the voice of the Spirit regarding the Church because I had been unwilling to do so. From the time I began praying for a testimony of the Church, the answers had come to me quietly, little by little, but I had refused to hear.

During that institute lesson I felt a change in my heart that I could not understand, and the heavy burden of doubt I had carried for nine years left me. I now accepted what I had previously doubted.

But even then I was tempted to fight against the Spirit. I told myself

As I watched the video, I recognized that I had never listened to the voice of the Spirit regarding the Church. The answers had come to me quietly, little by little, but I had refused to hear.

that what I was feeling was just a passing impression, an emotional response to the film. This war continued inside me as I left the classroom, so I found a place to be alone. And there the presence of the Holy Spirit came to me more clearly and finally liberated me from my doubts. I was filled with incomparable joy. A weight was lifted from my shoulders.

Now I can say with full conviction that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true Church, restored in these last days by Jesus Christ through the Prophet Joseph Smith. This testimony is precious to me. With it, I feel spiritually prepared to receive the greater light and knowledge the Lord and His Church have to offer.

Isabel Berrios is a member of the Linde Ward, Cochabamba Bolivia Cobija Stake.

From a Single Seed

By Rex Eugene Cooper

One of the most discouraging parts of my mission was the four months I spent in Tulancingo, México. The work was difficult. Day after day my companion and I spent



long hours tracting, and no one was interested.

Finally, we found two men who listened to our message. I was excited because I felt these men would be great assets to Tulancingo's small branch. But when both decided not to accept baptism, I was devastated.

About this time a 12-year-old girl came to Tulancingo to visit a family in the branch. She became interested in the Church and readily accepted the gospel. A short time later her father gave permission for her to be baptized.

But this baptism did little to lessen the disappointment I felt regarding those two men. I had hoped they would help build up the Church in this area. Because the girl was so young and the only member in her family, I wondered if she would remain active. She soon left Tulancingo after her baptism, and I lost contact with her. In fact, I completely forgot about her.

It has been more than 35 years

since my mission, and not long ago I unexpectedly received the following letter:

Dear Brother Cooper,

My name is J. Jovita Pérez Acosta. I was baptized on 1 December 1965 in Tulancingo. I always thought I would very much like to thank you for bringing the gospel into my life.

When you taught me the gospel, I was 12 years old and was spending the summer in Tulancingo. I remember clearly the day I heard the history of Joseph Smith. I felt it was true, and that same night I knelt for the first time and prayed as you had taught me. On that occasion I learned how to talk with my Heavenly Father.

My mother was angry with my father because of my baptism, and they sent me to a Catholic boarding school. There were no members of the Church in all the area. I didn't even have a Book of Mormon. But I continued to pray, and the seed you planted in my heart began to germinate.

One day while analyzing my religious situation, I felt that Heavenly Father was not pleased with me. I was confused. I told Him I wanted to belong to His Church. I asked that He help me be a good daughter to Him. A little while after this, I felt compelled to write to the [LDS] Church school in México City to ask to be enrolled there. I was accepted. It was then that my testimony began to form.

Seven years later my three younger sisters joined the Church, and they also went to live at the Church school. My mother had us attend her church during the summers; but even so, we read the scriptures, and we began to have family home evening. Ten years after my baptism, my mother and my youngest brother were baptized. A year later my father was baptized. We were the first member family in our town and in all the towns roundabout. The nearest meetinghouse was four hours away. My parents would travel every two weeks to go to Church services there.

During this period I became very ill and went to live for some months with my parents. We had family home evening every week. My mother would invite almost everyone around, and about 30 attended.

One day I called the mission home in México City to ask that missionaries be sent, and this was how the first branch was born in all that region. My father was the branch president, and my mother was the Relief Society president. Now there are many branches in the

other towns, and they have been formed into two districts.

My youngest sister converted the man who is now her husband, and they both served missions. He is a bishop in Ciudad Juárez, and they have five children. Two of my nephews and a niece have also served missions. My oldest son returned last year from his mission, and my daughter is currently serving in Washington, D.C. My youngest son leaves next month to serve a mission in México.

In all, my parents have 26 grandchildren who are members of the Church. As you can see, one of the little seeds you planted many years ago has been transformed into a tree, and it is giving fruit and producing seeds for new trees. Isn't it glorious? When my oldest son left for his mission, I told him that all he had to do was plant with love in the vineyard of the Lord. Perhaps he would never see the tree grow and produce fruit, but the Lord would.

The gospel has given me much happiness, and without it, I don't know what my life would be. I know that Jesus Christ is my Redeemer and that His work will move forward, blessing the families of the earth.

Your sister in the faith,
Jovita Pérez

As I read this letter, I was filled with joy. I now realize that perhaps the most important thing I accomplished on my mission was something

that had seemed almost insignificant at the time.

Missionaries are rarely aware of all the results of their labors. But if we do all the good we can, without wondering and worrying about the consequences, we will find true joy in sharing the gospel.

Rex Eugene Cooper is a member of the Highland Fourth Ward, Highland Utah East Stake.

My Friend "Milkshake"

By Robert Lee "Rocky" Crockrell

In February 1958, at age 17, I entered the United States Navy. I was assigned to an aircraft carrier, where I met Raymond Covington from Provo, Utah.

I thought Raymond was a bit strange—no smoking, no drinking, no cursing, no nothing. I asked him what he did for enjoyment. He said he did a lot of things, but mostly what he enjoyed was either starting or ending his day with one or two big milk shakes. So Raymond was given the nickname "Milkshake."

At night, Raymond would tell me about his church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I was really quite interested, until he told me that if I joined his church, I could not hold the priesthood. That did not go over well with me. Seeing my agitation,

Raymond expressed his feeling that perhaps one day the priesthood would be available to me.

As time went by I began to favor Raymond above all my friends because of the way he lived. After a while I found I had ceased to live the kind of life I had been living, and I wanted to do the right thing. He made me realize I didn't have to curse or drink alcohol. I could make the choice to live a righteous life.

One day several of the guys were sitting on the deck gambling. One

of them looked up at Raymond and said, "Milkshake! Say this curse word and you can have all the money in the pot." I quickly counted the money and found the total to be two months' pay. I figured since he and I were buddies, Raymond would give me half. But to my dismay, he would not curse. I pleaded with him, but he didn't believe in that kind of talk. I knew then that to be a true Latter-day Saint was a sacred responsibility.

Raymond was discharged in June 1961, and I was discharged later

One of the sailors looked up at Raymond and said, "Milkshake! Say this curse word and you can have all the money in the

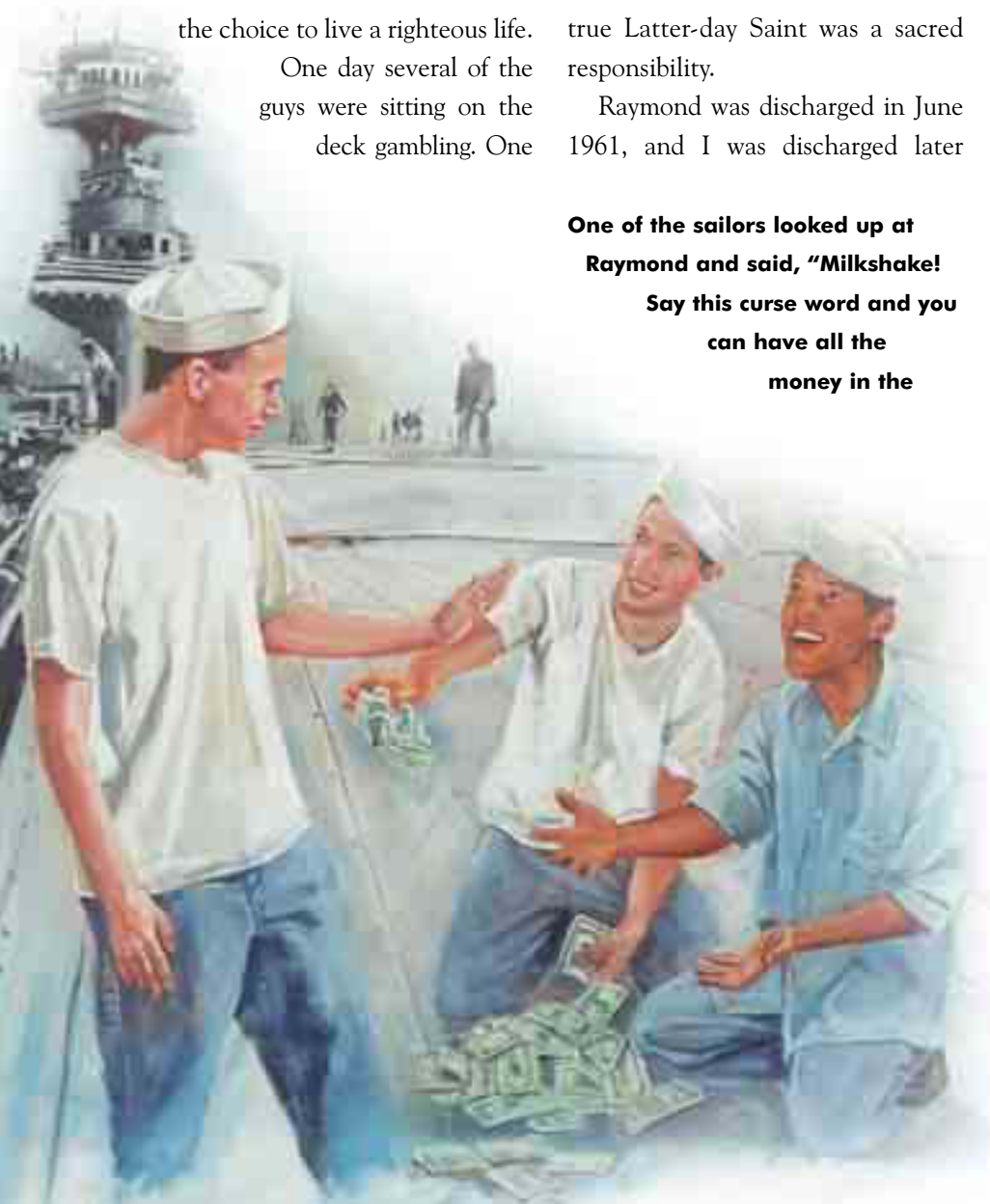
that year. I often wondered what had happened to my old friend.

One day many years later, in 1990, while looking out the window of my home in the state of Washington in the United States, I spotted two nicely dressed young men. They were missionaries for the Church, and I invited them in. After talking with them a little while, I found out that Raymond's hopes had come true: President Spencer W. Kimball had received a revelation in 1978 directing that all worthy males could receive the priesthood. I was elated. After receiving the missionary lessons, I agreed to be baptized.

About this time I told a neighbor, also a member of the Church, about my friendship with Raymond. I had no idea the neighbor would go to Utah and actually find Raymond. Two weeks later my old friend "Milkshake" drove more than 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) to speak at my baptism. He said he always knew I would join the Church.

In December 1997, I got a call from Raymond's daughter, telling me he had passed away. I was saddened by the news, but I smile when I think of the reunion Rocky and his friend Milkshake will someday have on the other side of the veil. □

Robert Lee "Rocky" Crockrell is a member of the Wollochet Ward, Tacoma Washington Stake.



Friends Forever

By Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94)

My wife and I were in the front of our yard one day when the newspaper boy came down the street on his bicycle. His bicycle was loaded with papers. About 20 or 30 yards (20 or 25 meters) in back of him, there was another boy following him on a bicycle. I was not sure at that time what their relationship was, but I did notice they were coming down the street at a pretty good clip.

When the newspaper boy came to our sidewalk entry, he was traveling too fast to make the approach to our home, and, as a result, he went one way, the bicycle went another way, and the papers went everywhere. Noticing the boy had fallen on the lawn and was not hurt, but realizing that

he would undoubtedly be embarrassed from the fall in front of his friend, we moved toward him.

At the sight of this perfect three-point landing, if we may refer to it as that, his companion shouted his pleasure and laughed heartily with complete and full enjoyment at the misfortune of his associate.

Trying to relieve the embarrassment of the paperboy, knowing he didn't want help but he wanted to have his pride repaired a little, I took a few more steps toward him and said: "It's kind of a low blow to



Elder Marvin J. Ashton served in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles from 1971 to 1994. He was sustained as an Assistant to the Twelve on 3 October 1969, the day he gave this address.

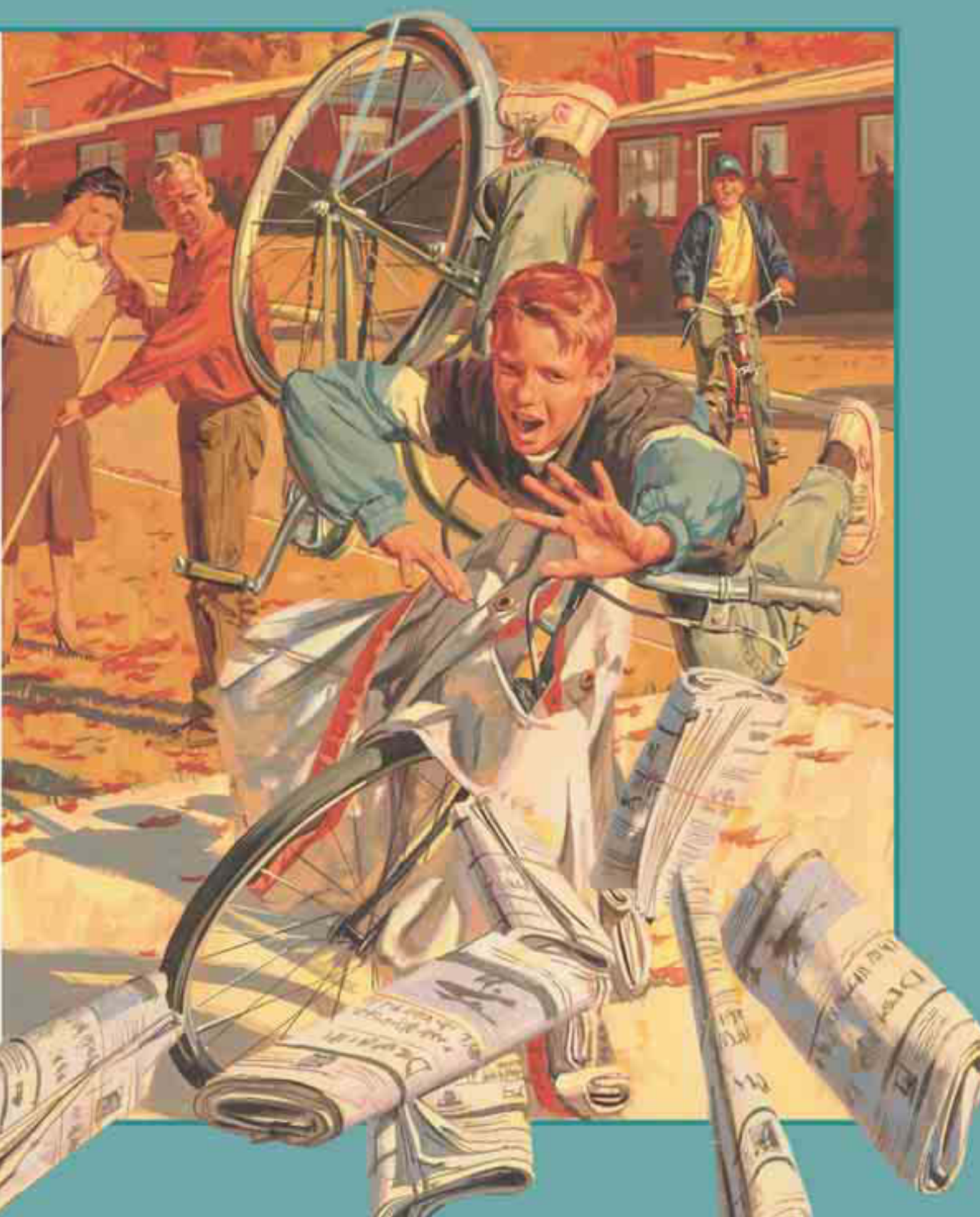
have your friend laugh when you've had a bad spill, isn't it?"

He went on picking up his papers without even looking up. Finally, he had the papers back in place and got on his bicycle; and as he started out away from our home, he made the remark: "He isn't my friend—he's my brother."

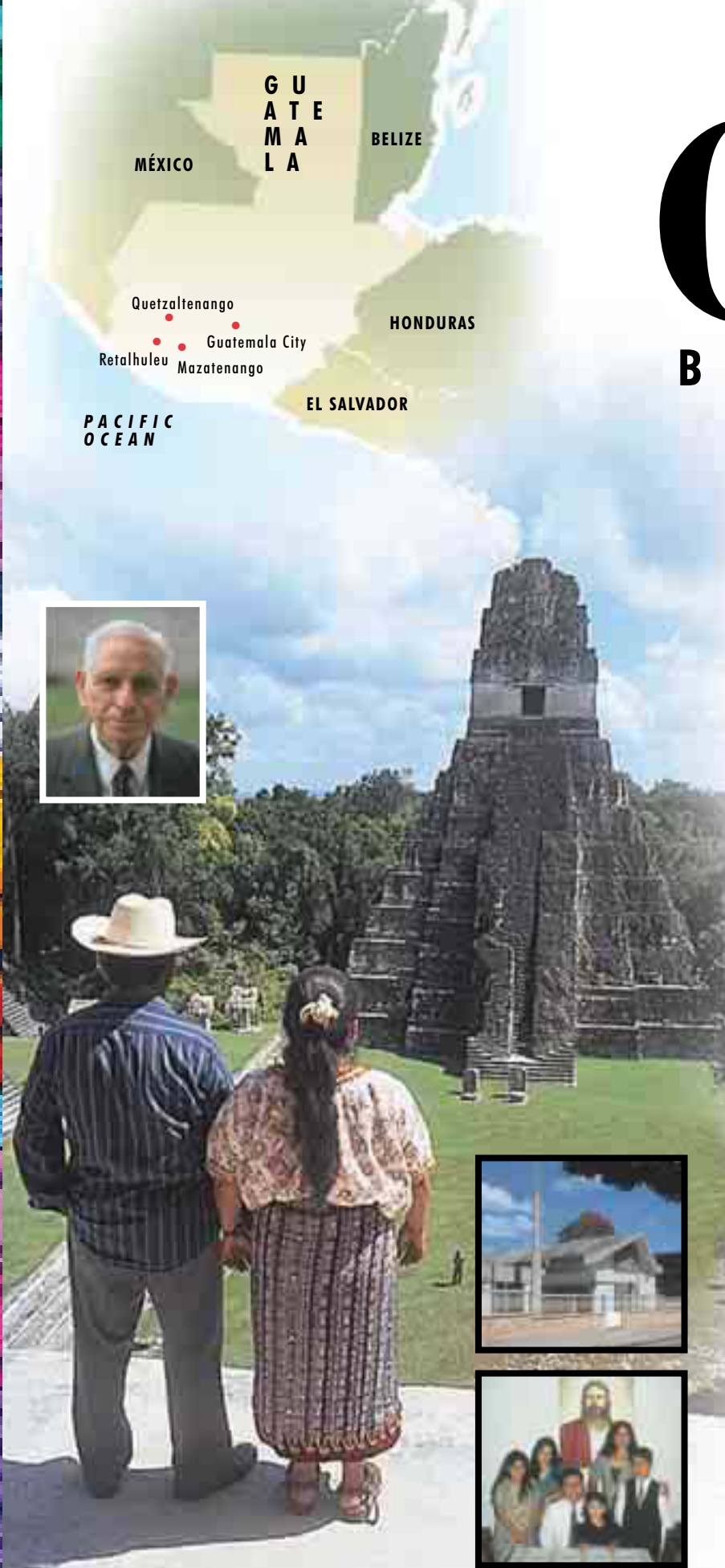
His words have been ringing through my ears with a great deal of significance ever since then. I sincerely feel that one of the great purposes of family evenings and home teaching is to have family members realize that a brother can be a friend, and that a sister can be a friend, and that a father and a mother can be more than parents—they can be friends.

I would hope and pray that we may catch the wisdom and the inspiration of building a home so that our members in that sacred unit can look upon a father and say, "He is my best friend," or "My mother is more than a mother; she is my friend." When we realize that parents and family members can be more than blood relations and are in very deed friends, then we will have a glimpse of how our Heavenly Father wants us to live, not only as brothers and sisters but as very close friends. □

From an October 1969 general conference address.



GUA BUILDING



Gospel roots have grown deep in this land of ancient American heritage. The blossoming of the present holds promise for even greater future growth.

By Don L. Searle

Berta López points to a row of young women in a picture on the yellowed page of a *Liahona* (Spanish): “There I am.” She was a teenager then, one of a handful attending an activity for Latter-day Saint girls in Guatemala City that day in 1951. There were fewer than a dozen. But that was two generations ago for the Church in Guatemala.

Left: A Guatemalan couple visits Mayan ruins at Tikal. **Top inset:** Udine Falabella, first stake president in Guatemala. **Middle inset:** Guatemala City’s Montúfar chapel—the first Church-built chapel in Central America. **Bottom inset:** The family of Federico Castro, president of the Guatemala City Guatemala Atlántico Stake.

TEMMALA

T O W A R D T H E F U T U R E

Now Berta can look out her window at the house next door, where her daughter, Gina Ramírez, is directing an activity for a Primary Valiant class. Gina is Primary president in a branch of the Guatemala City Guatemala Stake, one of 20 stakes in the city. What Berta sees represents the kind of growth that members in Guatemala could only dream of 50 years ago.

In another part of the capital city, young Ricardo Ayala and his family go to their stake center to watch a fireside broadcast from Salt Lake City, with simultaneous translation in their own language.

Ricardo, a member of the Guatemala City Guatemala Palmita Stake, will finish secondary school this year, and he hopes to go on a mission when he turns 19. While finding a job may not be easy, he plans to work and save so he can pay the whole cost of the mission himself.

Because of Latter-day Saints like the López and Ayala families, perceptions about the Church have changed in Guatemala. Misinformation about the Church, once

common here, has little credibility now. Today many Guatemalans know Latter-day Saints and know what they stand for. The proportion of Church members in this nation's population (about 1.5 percent) is close to that of the United States (about 1.8 percent). Just as the temple has become a landmark in Guatemala City, Latter-day Saints are becoming landmarks in their society.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Latter-day Saint missionaries first came to Guatemala in 1947, after John F. O'Donnal, a North American living there, visited Church headquarters in Salt Lake City and reported that there were people in the country ready to hear the gospel. His wife, Carmen, was the first Guatemalan baptized. Brother O'Donnal later served as a mission president and temple president in Guatemala.

In 1952 the Central American Mission was created. Before it was divided in 1965, it served six countries: Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua,

and Panama. Now there are four missions in Guatemala alone and 40 stakes in the country. In 1989 Elder Carlos H. Amado, a native of Guatemala, was called as a member of the Seventy.

But several important challenges have faced the Church in Guatemala. One of the greatest challenges for Guatemalan members is fighting traditions, says Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy, former President of the Central America Area. The dominant religion of Guatemala does not involve its members in meetings or in teaching and leadership. So some new members find the transition to Church activity difficult. Some older members have simply slipped out of activity, so there is much work to be done in activation.

Following counsel from the Area Presidency, local priesthood leaders visit less-active members and use the same commitment pattern that missionaries use in teaching. They ask questions beginning with "Will you?" Will you visit with the bishop or branch president to resolve problems that are keeping you from full



Church activity? Will you visit with him about getting a recommend and going to the temple? The questions are suited to the members' needs.

When Milton Leonel Lima, bishop of the Minerva Ward, Jalapa Guatemala Stake, attempted this approach with 14 members, 10 accepted his invitation and began making the necessary changes in their lives. The bishop and his counselors immediately began identifying other members to visit.

The Area Presidency is also "focusing strongly on getting a greater number of our young men on missions," Elder Robbins says. The percentage of those going on missions rose more than 50 percent in 2000.

Guatemalans also face economic challenges, with as many as 25 percent unemployed or underemployed. The Church's area employment services office is providing training, particularly for returned missionaries, in preparing for and finding jobs or in starting businesses. The Church also assists microcredit organizations that help small businesses get started. And during school breaks, some stakes are offering classes for youth on job skills.

A CULTURE IN CHANGE

Life for Guatemalans has changed significantly in the years since the gospel was introduced in their country.

Notably, Guatemala's indigenous

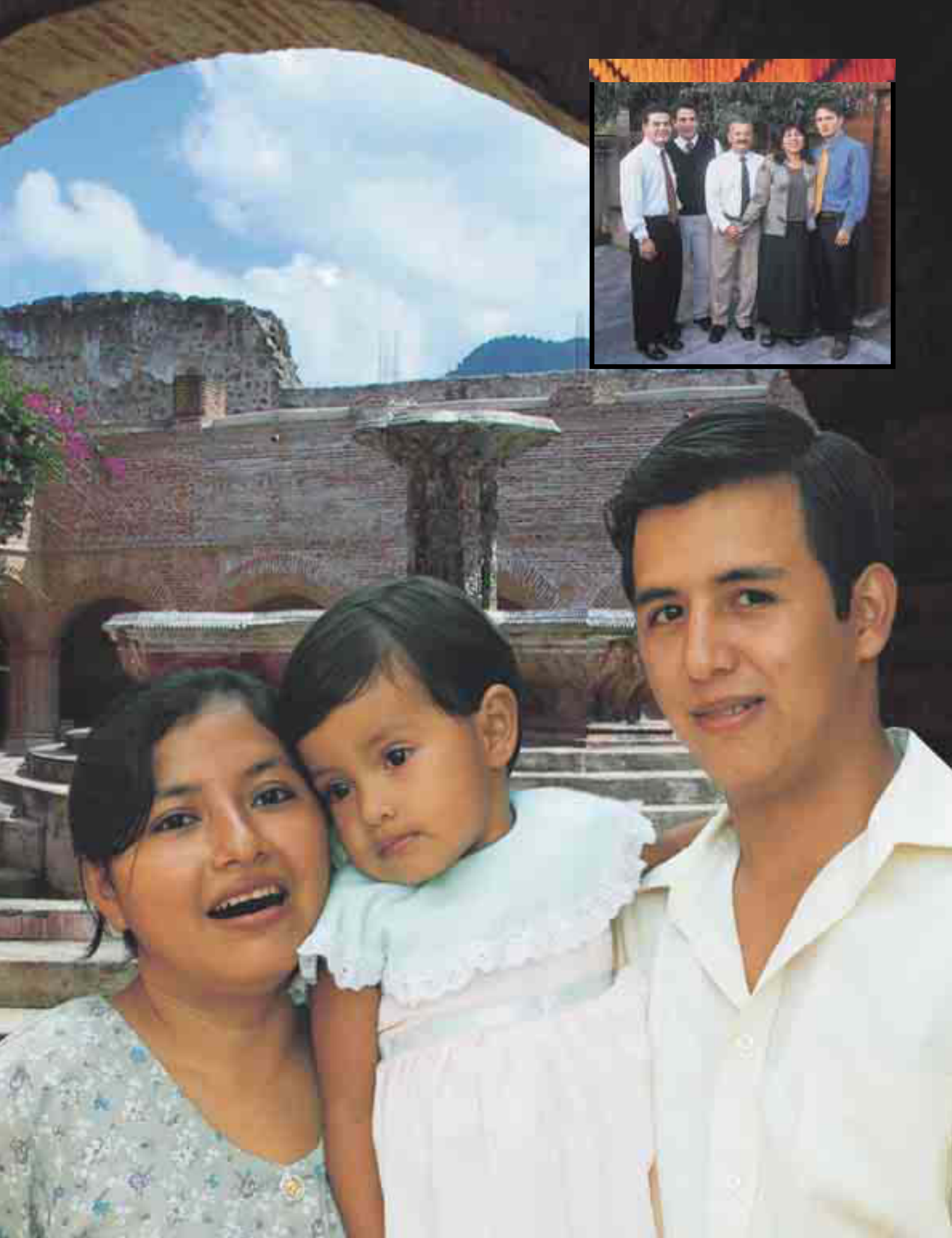
Right: Ada and Nery Marroquín of Retalhuleu with their daughter, Blanca. Background: Fountain in a courtyard in Antigua. Inset: Rubén and Iris Ayala of the Guatemala City Guatemala Palmita Stake with three of their children—Rubén, José, and Ricardo.

people, including those of Mayan descent, are coming into the mainstream of the Church and of Guatemalan society. In Polochic and other centers of Mayan population, Church meetings are often conducted in members' native languages, but most people can now speak Spanish. A generation ago, in the mid-1960s, some Spanish-speaking missionaries learned Mayan languages because in many families only the men spoke Spanish. Now this is no longer necessary.

Guatemala's literacy rate has also improved, which means that many Mayan members can now read the scriptures that have been translated into their languages. The Book of Mormon is available in Kekchí, and selections from it are available in Quiché, Cakchiquel, and Mam, the principal Mayan languages of the country.

Timoteo and Eva Boj of Quetzaltenango are of Mayan descent; they joined the Church in the mid-1970s. Today members of the Boj family are well known in the community as successful entrepreneurs.





From this family—which includes 8 children and their spouses and 18 grandchildren—have come four bishops, four Relief Society presidents, six Primary presidents, four Young Men presidents, five Young Women presidents, and seven missionaries. They are a family of hearty good humor who eagerly serenade visitors with a local favorite song, “Luna de Xelajú” (“Moon of Xelajú”; Xelajú is the traditional name for the city of Quetzaltenango). And their example and love for others have also brought many into the Church.

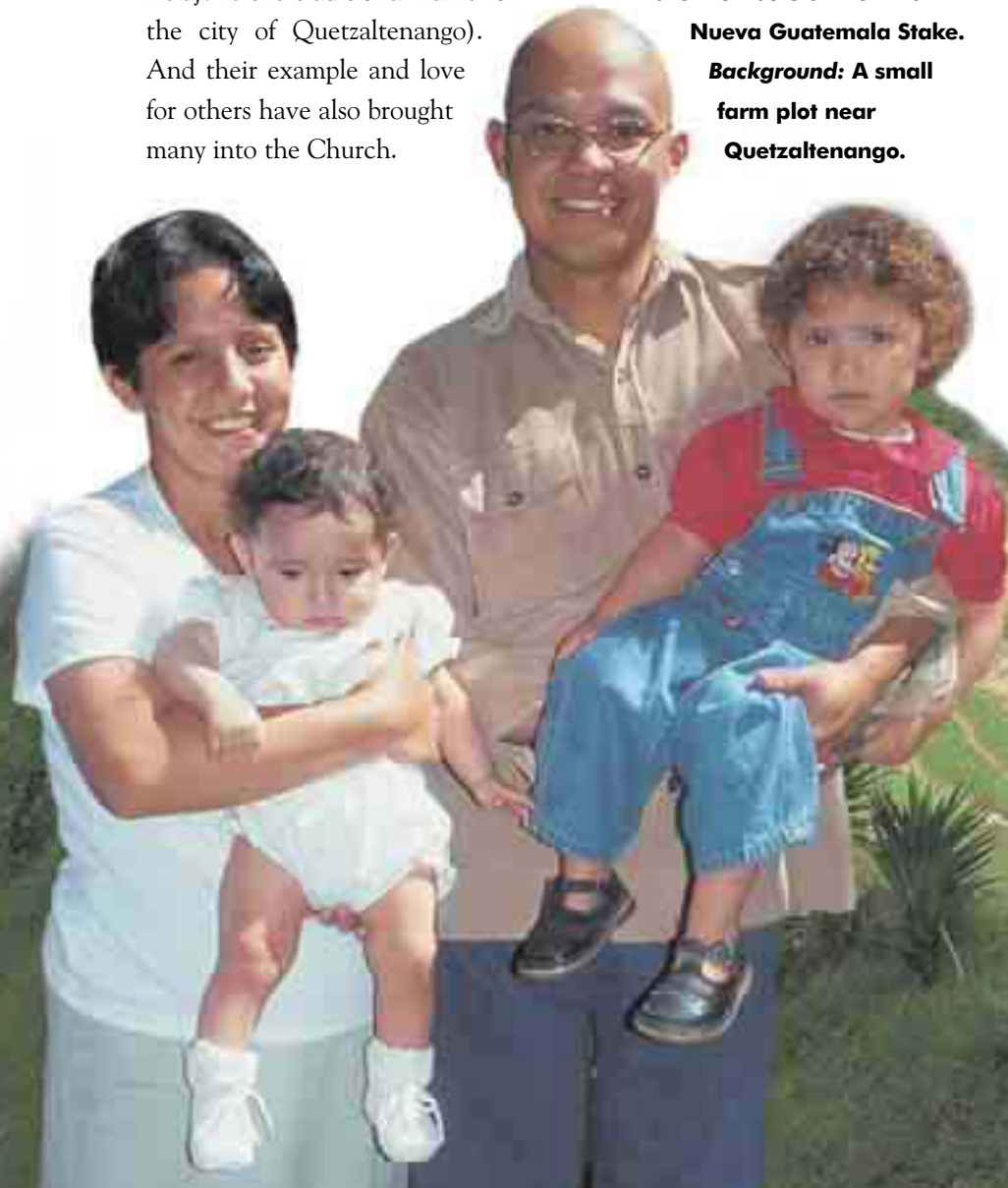
A VIBRANT, LIVING FAITH

Faith is thriving among the Saints of Guatemala. Following are just a few examples:

■ Carlos Santíz, president of the Mazatenango Guatemala Stake, refers to notes made on a whiteboard during a meeting with bishops, explaining

Hector González, a cancer survivor; his wife, María; and their daughters are members of the Villa Nueva Guatemala Stake.

Background: A small farm plot near Quetzaltenango.



The Church at a Glance

- National population:**
approximately 11.5 million
- Church membership:**
more than 179,000
- Stakes: 40**
- Missions: 4**
- Wards and branches: 453**
- Church-owned meetinghouses: 261**
- Temple: Guatemala City, dedicated in 1984**
- Missionary Training Center: Guatemala City**

how they followed the direction of Church leaders to meet in council and plan to serve the needs of less-active members. “I’m grateful to the Lord for putting me in this stake presidency because it is a challenge—but a challenge I needed—and it has brought growth,” he says.

■ Nery Eduardo Marroquín, a counselor in the bishopric of a ward in the Retalhuleu Guatemala Stake, was an evangelical Christian before joining the Church five years ago through the influence of his wife, Ada. He grew up in a home where he learned the importance of personal prayer, the Bible, and worship of Jesus Christ as the Savior, but he felt there was something more. He found it in gospel ordinances that could allow him and his wife to have an eternal family. “Christ said no one will come to the Father ‘but by me’ [John 14:6],” he explains. “And the ordinances are through Him. That’s why it’s such a blessing to have a temple in Guatemala.”

■ Hector González of the Villa Nueva Guatemala Stake says the gospel has given him strength to face the cancer that cost him a leg and nearly took his life. At one point, he wondered why this should happen to him. His wife brought his patriarchal blessing to him in the hospital, and he found hope in its promise of a long life of service. When it became obvious that he

would lose his right leg, he received a spiritual witness that all would be well. After the surgery, he recalls, “It was incredible the support I found in reading the Book of Mormon. It gave me the strength to go on.” Now back at work, he says, “I know the Lord has been watching over me. I know He has cared for me through all of this.”

■ Jorge Popá, a member of the Quetzaltenango Guatemala Stake, originally invited the sister missionaries to his home to help his wife understand the English instructions that came with the bread maker he had bought her. The sisters agreed—if they could also share the gospel message with the family. After the missionary lessons, Jorge and his wife, Mirna, told the missionaries they weren’t interested in baptism. But that night neither Jorge nor Mirna could sleep. At the same time, each felt moved to get out of bed and pray about what they had been taught, and each received the same manifestation of the truth. They sought out the sister missionaries at church on Sunday and asked to be baptized. After their baptism, the Popás faced the problem many converts face: how to tell their family they had broken with the traditional religion. Their four-year-old son (who is now a deacon) solved that problem at a family gathering. When someone served tea,

he stood and announced, “We don’t drink that! We’re Mormons.”

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Udine Falabella was president of the first stake organized in Guatemala, in 1967. In 1965, as district president in Guatemala City, he organized the first temple trip from the area, by bus across México to Mesa, Arizona, in the United States. It was a great blessing to Guatemala when the temple was dedicated in Guatemala City in 1984, he says. It was a blessing for him to serve later as its president; he was released in 2000 after more than four years in that position.

He recalls that, in dedicating the temple, President Gordon B. Hinckley pronounced a blessing of peace on the country. Not long afterward, the country’s long period of civil strife came to an end. Perhaps more important, though, was the fact that Guatemalan members could now enjoy the peace of the temple without having to travel so far from home.

Brother Falabella’s granddaughter Evelyn was married in that temple in December 2000. She says many young Guatemalans who see unhappy or failing marriages around them have lost faith in the institution of marriage and may feel it is better to put time into developing their careers, marrying later if at all. “I believe if I didn’t have the gospel in my life, I wouldn’t have dared get married right



now,” she says. But through the gospel, she continues, there is peace in facing the challenges because we can know the eternal reasons for marriage and the everlasting blessings it can bring.

And that, says Brother Falabella, is indicative of the change that has come to the Church in Guatemala in his lifetime: thousands of strong Latter-day Saints now have all the means to implement full gospel programs and enjoy their blessings.

José Sazo agrees that the gospel blessings available in his country and his generation are rich—for those

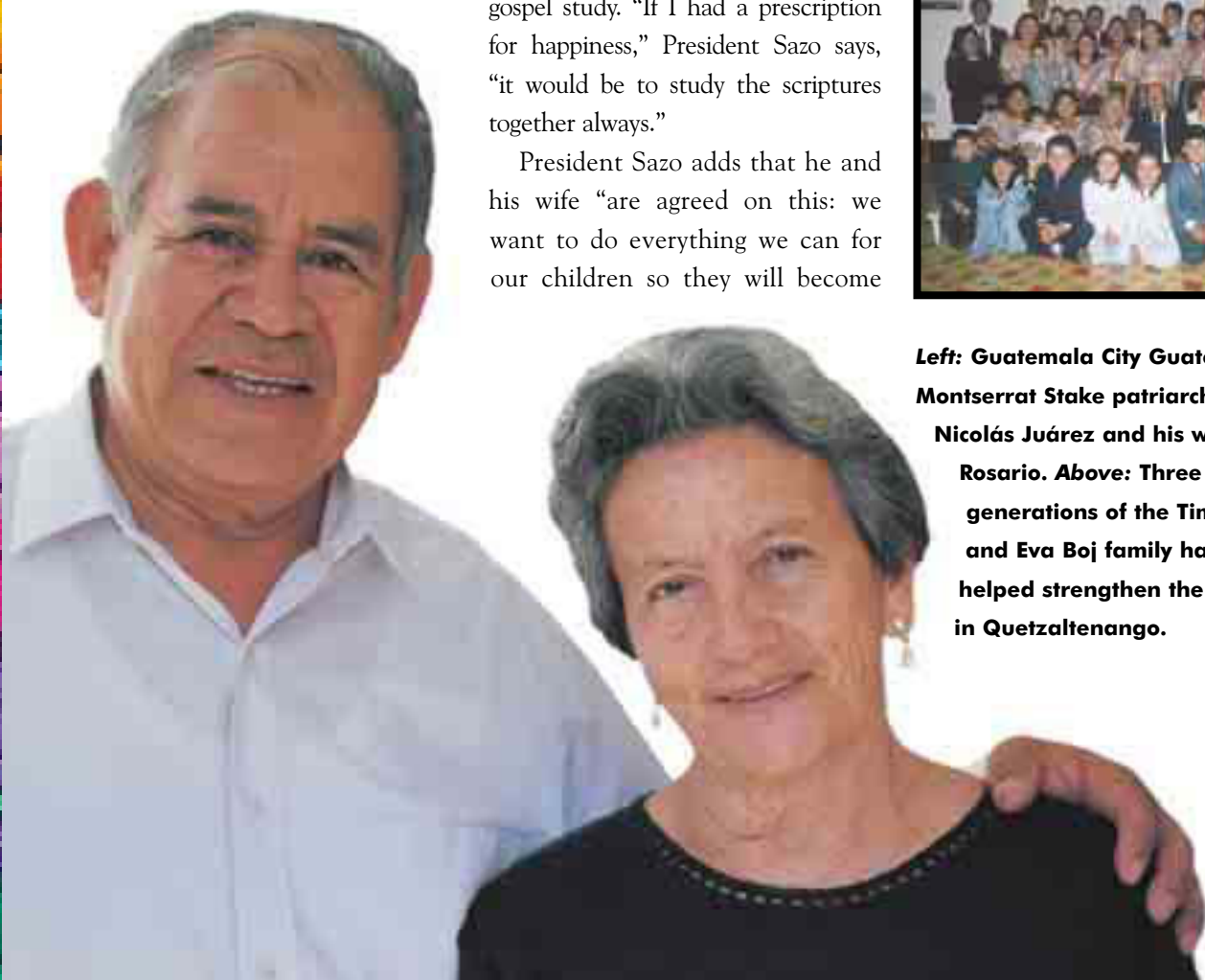
who strive to receive them. José, who was not yet born when that first stake was created in Guatemala, is now president of the Guatemala City Guatemala Florida Stake.

It takes constant, consistent effort to maintain strong families and marriages, President Sazo says. He and his wife, Claudia, both served missions in their country, and they agree that much of the secret to maintaining strong marriages can be found in two good habits learned by missionaries: frequent, loving companionship evaluations (conversations about how their marriage is going) and regular gospel study. “If I had a prescription for happiness,” President Sazo says, “it would be to study the scriptures together always.”

President Sazo adds that he and his wife “are agreed on this: we want to do everything we can for our children so they will become

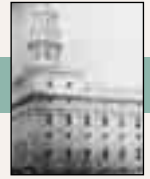
strong leaders and the Lord will be able to call them to do whatever He wants, without reservation.”

So it was with those strong Church members in this country more than half a century ago who were willing to persevere in the gospel no matter what challenges they faced. And so it is now with the heirs of this spiritual legacy: the future of the Church in Guatemala will be in the hands of those ready to answer the call of the Lord without reservation. □



Left: Guatemala City Guatemala Montserrat Stake patriarch Felipe Nicolás Juárez and his wife, Rosario. Above: Three generations of the Timoteo and Eva Boj family have helped strengthen the Church in Quetzaltenango.

DID YOU KNOW?



ON YOUR HONOR

Karl G. Maeser was born in 1828 in Saxony, Germany, and joined the Church in his native land. In 1860, when Dr. Maeser and his family moved to Utah, he became the private tutor to Brigham Young's family. Sixteen years later, President Young called him to become the principal of the Brigham Young Academy, forerunner to Brigham Young University.

Before Brother Maeser left for this new assignment, President Young told him: "I want you to remember that you ought not to teach even the alphabet or the multiplication tables without the Spirit of God. That is all. God bless you. Goodbye." In the difficult years that followed, that admonition guided Brother Maeser's efforts. (See Edwin Butterworth Jr., "Eight Presidents: A Century at BYU," *Ensign*, October 1975, 23.)

Karl G. Maeser was known not only for his intelligence and teaching skills but also for his humility and integrity. He said: "Place me behind prison walls—walls of stone ever so thick, reaching ever so far into

the ground—there is a possibility that in some way or another I may be able to escape; but stand me on the floor and draw a chalk line around me and have me give my word of honor never to cross it. Can I get out of that circle? No, never! I'd die first!" (quoted in Ernest L. Wilkinson, *The President Speaks*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [5 October 1960], 15).

IT HAPPENED IN MAY

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

15 May 1829. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist on the bank of the Susquehanna River.

8 May 1834. Zion's Camp began its march from Ohio to Missouri to assist the Missouri Saints.

1 May 1846. The original Nauvoo Temple was dedicated publicly by Elder Orson Hyde of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.



LEADERSHIP TIP

Jesus Christ emphasized the need for unity (see John 17:6–11, 20–23; 3 Nephi 11:28–30). In a latter-day revelation He said, "If ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27). As leaders you can build unity among yourselves and among your quorum or class members by:

- Getting to know the members of your quorum or class and praying for them.
- Involving quorum or class members in planning activities. They will be more likely to attend an activity and to feel valued if they know they are essential to what is going on.
- Planning your activities with a specific goal in mind. You might ask yourselves: Is someone in our quorum or class struggling? How can our next activity help this person feel a part of our group? □

Using the May 2002 *Liahona*

DISCUSSION IDEAS

■ “Pillars of Truth,” page 2: President Gordon B. Hinckley identifies seven eternal, unchanging truths. How can each of these pillars of truth support and sustain you in this constantly changing world?

■ “Learning to Serve,” page 10: Elder L. Tom Perry teaches that we must learn before we can serve. What knowledge is most important for us to learn? How can acquiring this knowledge help us serve effectively?

■ “When Life Gets Tough,” page 28: Elder John B. Dickson makes the surprising statement that losing his right arm at age 19 was not tragic; it turned out to be a great blessing in his life. Discuss something you have had to give up, only to discover later that the sacrifice has made you stronger and more capable.

■ “Stay in the Boat,” page F2: Relate Elder Russell M. Nelson’s story about his daughter who wanted to get out of the boat in the middle of the lake. What does it mean to “stay in the boat” until we reach the shore?

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN LUKE



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TRYING TO BE LIKE JESUS

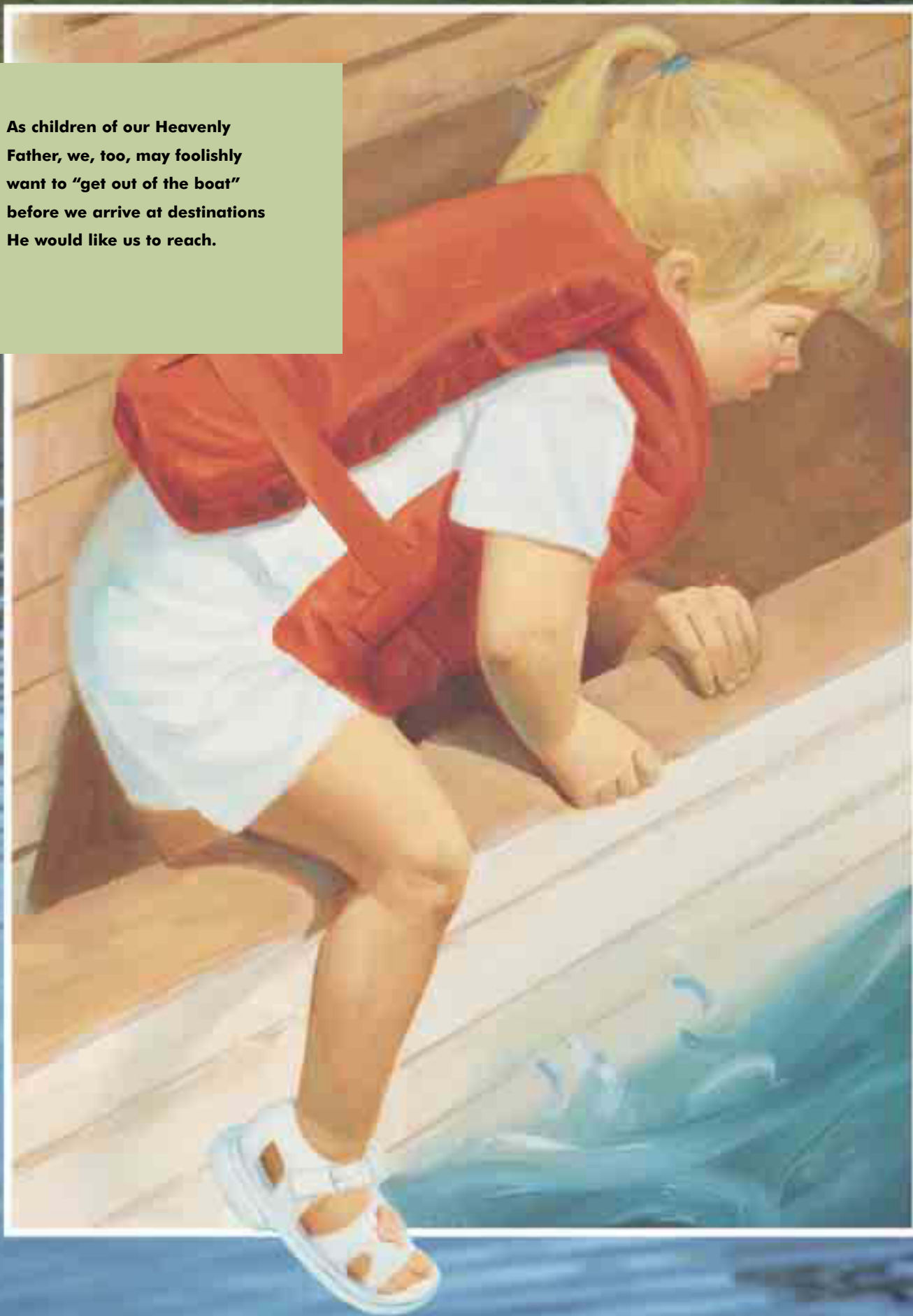
The *Liahona* would like to hear about experiences children have had in trying to be like the Savior. An older person can help write the article. Please include at least one photograph, along with your name, age, address, telephone number, ward and stake (or branch and district). Send your article to Trying to Be like Jesus, *Liahona*, Floor 24, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223, USA; or e-mail to CUR-Liahona-IMag@ldschurch.org.

The Friend

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



As children of our Heavenly Father, we, too, may foolishly want to “get out of the boat” before we arrive at destinations He would like us to reach.



STAY IN THE BOAT



By Elder Russell M. Nelson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Early in our married life, when Sister Nelson and I lived in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the United States, we decided to enjoy a free afternoon with our two-year-old daughter. We went to one of Minnesota's many beautiful lakes and rented a small boat. After rowing far from shore, we stopped to relax and enjoy the tranquil scene. Suddenly our little toddler lifted one leg out of the boat and started to go overboard, exclaiming, "Time to get out, Daddy!"

Quickly we caught her and explained, "No, dear, it *isn't* time to get out; we must stay in the boat until it brings us safely back to land." We had a hard time convincing her that leaving the boat early would lead to disaster.

As children of our Heavenly Father, we, too, may foolishly want to "get out of the boat" before we arrive at destinations He would like us to reach. The Lord teaches over and over that we are to endure (remain faithful) to the end.

What if Jesus had wavered in His commitment

to do His Father's will? His Atonement would not have been accomplished. The dead would not be resurrected. The blessings of eternal life would not be. But Jesus did endure. During His final hour, Jesus prayed to His Father, saying, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

Early in His mortal ministry, Jesus became concerned about the commitment of His followers. He had just fed 5,000, then had taught them the doctrines of the kingdom. But some had murmured, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60). Even after He had fed them, many lacked the faith to endure with Him.

He turned to the Twelve and said, "Will ye also go away?"

"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, . . . thou hast the words of eternal life.

"And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:67–69).

When we, like Peter, know without a doubt that Jesus is the Christ, we will want to stay with Him. We will have the power to endure. □

From an April 1997 general conference address.

“Ye Are the Temple of God”

By Vicki F. Matsumori



“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:16–17).



Close your eyes and picture a temple. What color is it? How big is it? Are there spires? How many?

Each temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is unique. The Salt Lake Temple in Utah has gray granite walls and six spires. The Cardston Alberta Temple in Canada has natural stone walls and no spires. Even though one temple may look different from another, all are beautiful and all are built for the same purpose. Special ordinances that make it possible for us to return to Heavenly Father take place in temples. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ can come to temples.

You are like the temple. You are different from everyone else, and you are a house for the Spirit of God (the Holy Ghost). The Apostle Paul said that our bodies are temples (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

Just as you treat the temple with respect, you should treat your body with respect. You can do this by obeying the Word of Wisdom (see D&C 89), by dressing modestly, and by following the counsel of President Gordon B. Hinckley to “be clean” (see “The Prophet’s Counsel: The Six B’s,” *The Friend*, June 2001, 8–9). One way to be clean is to read, listen to, and watch only “things that are pleasing to Heavenly Father” (see “My Gospel Standards,” *The Friend*, April 1999, 8–9).

If you are clean in mind and body, you can receive great blessings because “in the hearts of the righteous doth [the Lord] dwell” (Alma 34:36).

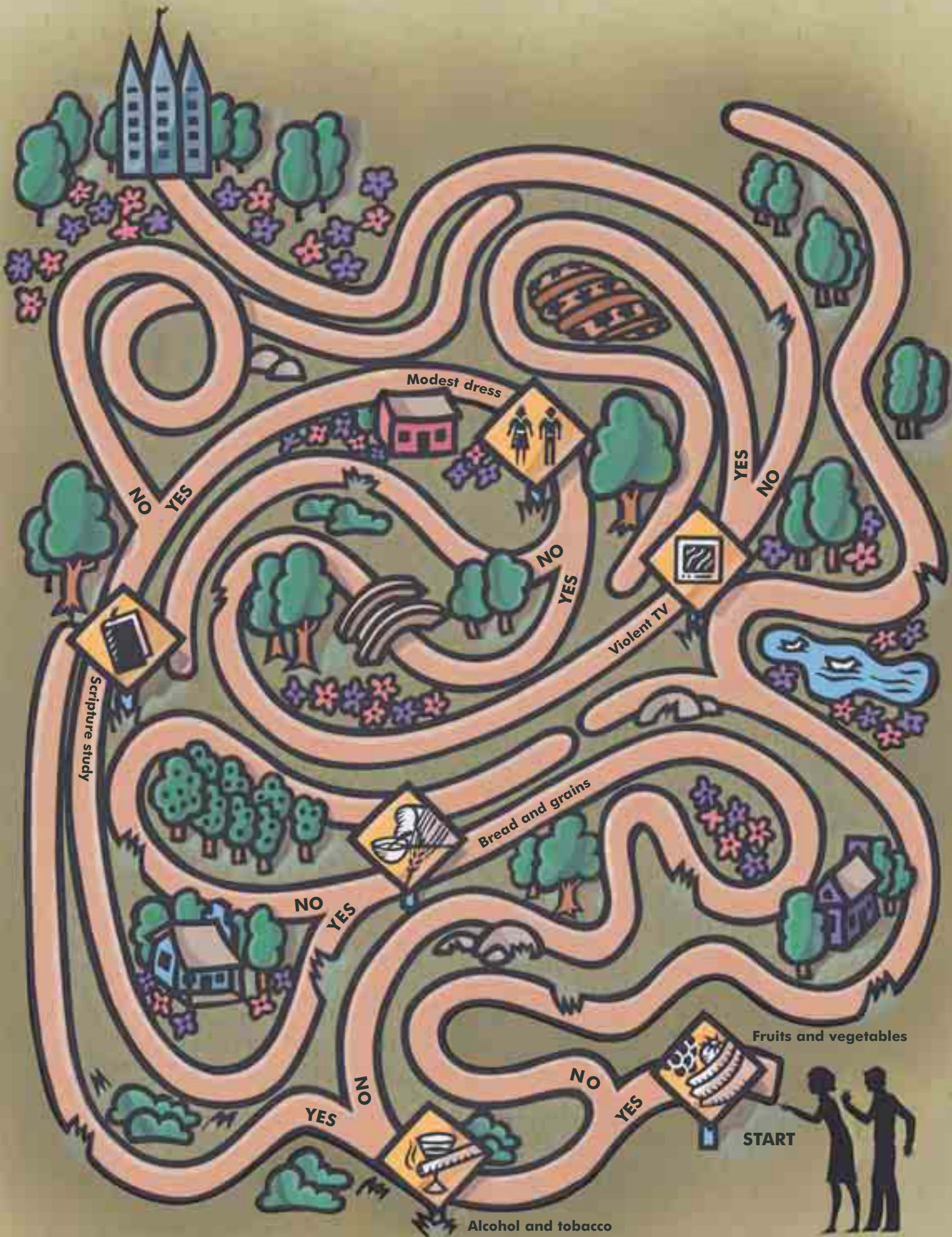
Instructions

Find your way through the maze by choosing the YES path if the picture shows something that helps you treat your mind and body as a temple of God. Choose the NO path if it is something that would not be good for your mind and body.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Invite members of the ward or branch to participate in a panel discussion on “My Body Is a Temple.” A week in advance, give the panel members the questions they will be asked. Sample questions: How much sleep should you get each night? Does it make a difference when you don’t get enough sleep? What is the value of good hygiene (bathing, dental care, hair care, washing hands before meals)? Why is it important to dress modestly? What can you do to help you make right choices? What counsel has President Gordon B. Hinckley given us about how we treat our bodies (see “The Prophet’s Counsel: The Six B’s,” *The Friend*, June 2001, 8–9)? Have the children take turns reading the questions. Have the panel members volunteer answers. Bear testimony of the blessings children can receive now and later as a result of treating their bodies with respect.

2. Help the children understand the influence of visual media by showing how long an image can be retained in the mind, even if seen for just a short time. Display a picture of a landscape or of an individual person for only five seconds. Have the children close their eyes and visualize the picture. Ask specific questions about it, such as What color was the girl wearing? or How many trees are in the picture? Discuss the importance of wholesome movies, television shows, and video and computer games. Have each child draw a scene from his or her favorite scripture story. Have each child hold up his or her picture for only five seconds. When the picture is hidden again, ask the other children to describe it. Then have the artist tell the scripture story and show the picture again. □



Scripture study

NO

YES

Modest dress

NO

YES

Violent TV

YES

NO

Bread and grains

NO

YES

Fruits and vegetables

YES

NO

NO

YES

START

Alcohol and tobacco

JUST ONE MORE

By Teresa Weaver

Based on an actual event

The answer has to be in that room. Maybe I missed a false wall, Jackson thought.

“How do you spell *kiwi*, Jackson?”

“Uh, what, Miss Grouder?”

“*Kiwi*. How do you spell it? We’ve been talking about the spelling test for the past 10 minutes. Where have you been?”

“Trying to rescue the princess of Mendoza,” Chester whispered from his seat behind Jackson.

Jackson felt his face getting hot. He had no idea how to spell *kiwi*.

Miss Grouder sighed as she gave Jackson’s spelling test back to him.

He had spelled most of the words wrong.



On the way home, Jackson crumpled the spelling test and stuffed it into the bottom of his backpack. Chester ran up behind him. “Do you want to come to my house and play soccer?”

“No,” Jackson replied. “I think I’ve figured out how to rescue the princess. Do you want to come watch?”

“Sit there and watch you play?” asked Chester. “No thanks! Seems like all you think about lately is video games.” Chester turned the corner toward his own house.

At home, Jackson turned on the computer and started the video game. *I’ll play one game, he thought, and then I’ll get going on my homework.*

Two hours later his mother called, “Time to eat, Jackson. We have to hurry or we’ll miss the start of the movie.”

“Coming, Mendoz—uh, Mom.” *If I can just get past this guard, he thought. His hand deftly moved the joystick back and forth. Too late. The figure on the screen toppled over. No fair! I’ll play just one more. I know I can do it.*

Suddenly the house seemed awfully quiet. Jackson grabbed his jacket and ran to the front door. His family was gone. There was a note on the table: “Gone to the movie. Wish you had come. Home by 8:00. Call Grandpa if you need anything.”

It’s all the guard’s fault! Jackson thought angrily as he stomped to his bedroom. His unfinished homework was on his bed. Beside it lay his scriptures. He hadn’t read them all week. And there was the family home evening manual. He was supposed to give the lesson next Monday. But he didn’t feel like doing any of those things tonight.

Good thing it’s Friday, Jackson thought as he headed back to the computer. *I’ll catch up on everything tomorrow.*

But he didn’t catch up the next day—or the next. And it wasn’t long before the sound of the piano interrupted Jackson’s concentration on his

latest attempt to rescue the princess. It was his sister playing the opening hymn for family home evening.

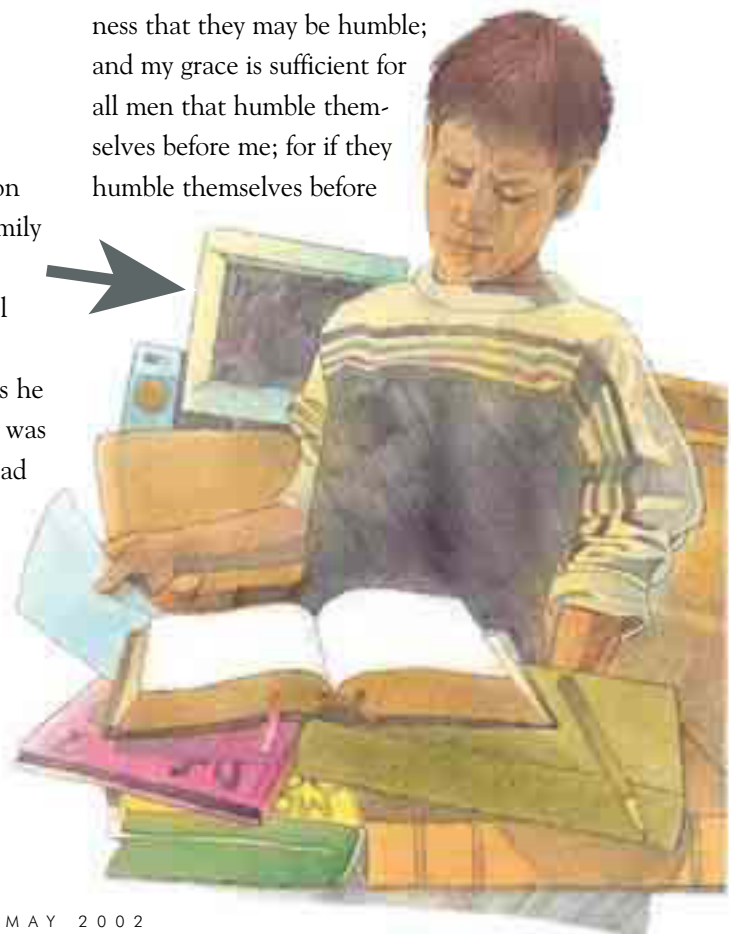
Family home evening! He had intended to prepare the lesson on Sunday, but he had gotten closer to rescuing the princess than ever before. Now it was too late to prepare.

Jackson grabbed his scriptures and ran to home evening. He would fake it. After all, they often read a scripture and talked about it so long they never got to the lesson. He would make sure they did that tonight.

“And help us apply the lesson to our lives,” his little brother said as he finished the opening prayer.

Jackson opened his scriptures to where he had last read. “Dad, could you read a scripture for us?” he asked. “How about Ether 12:27?”

His father read: “And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before





me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.”

“What do you think that means?” Jackson asked.

“Well,” said his father thoughtfully, “I think it means that we are given weakness to help us be humble. If we acknowledge our weakness and ask Heavenly Father to help us overcome it, it will become a strength to us.”

Mom raised her hand. “Soap operas were my weakness. Some days I didn’t do anything but watch my shows. The television was like a magnet, drawing me to it. It wasn’t until I admitted I had a problem that I figured out a solution.” Then she told how she had prayed and asked Heavenly Father to help her give up those shows.

Jackson squirmed in his chair. This wasn’t going quite like he wanted it to. He began to think about how much time *he* spent playing video games.

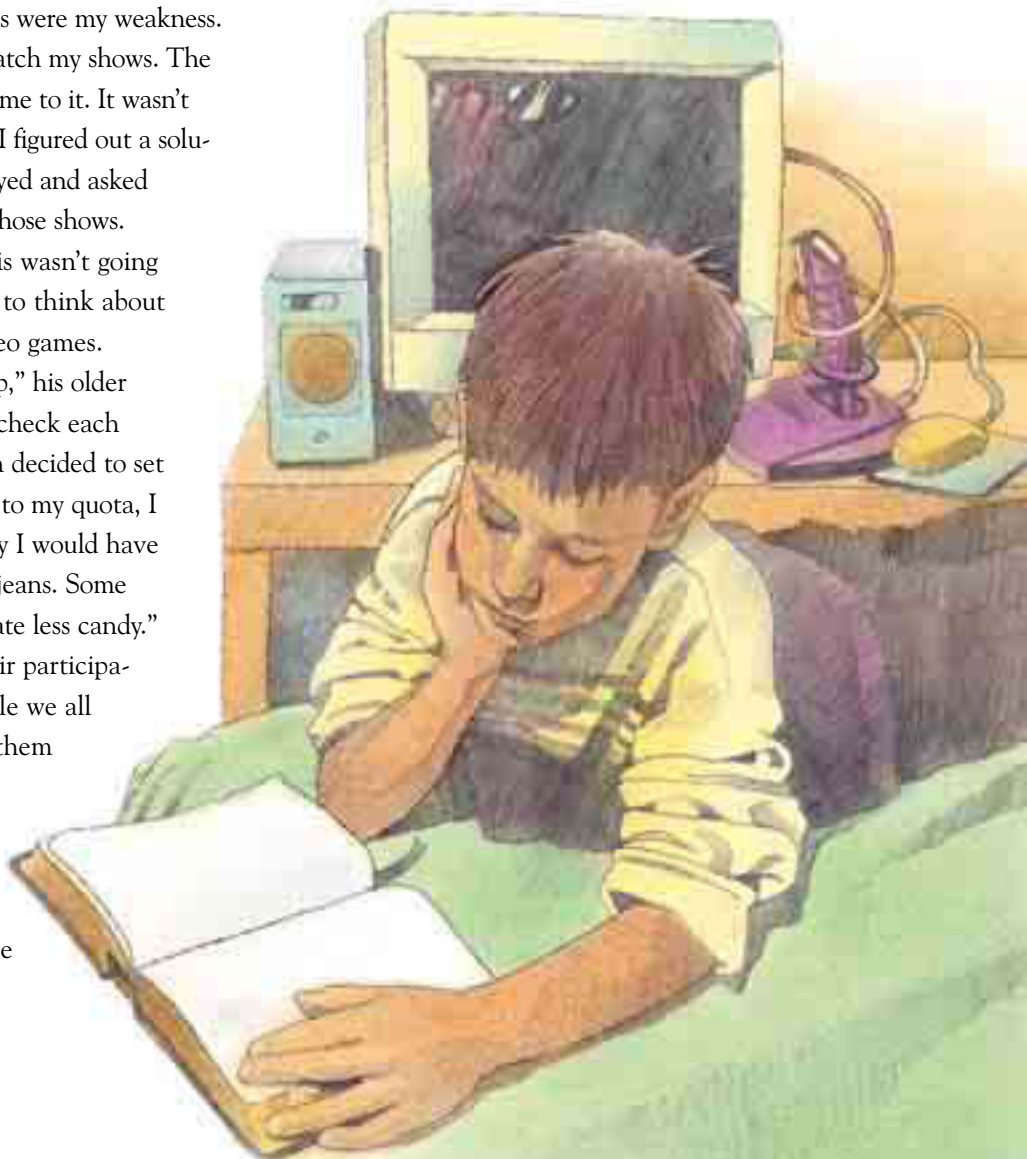
“When I worked at the candy shop,” his older sister began, “I practically ate my paycheck each week in candy. I prayed about it, then decided to set a candy quota for each day. If I stuck to my quota, I rewarded myself by putting the money I would have spent on candy toward a new pair of jeans. Some days I didn’t make it, but gradually I ate less candy.”

Jackson thanked everyone for their participation and bore his testimony that while we all have weaknesses, we can overcome them with Heavenly Father’s help. In fact, those weaknesses can even become our strengths.

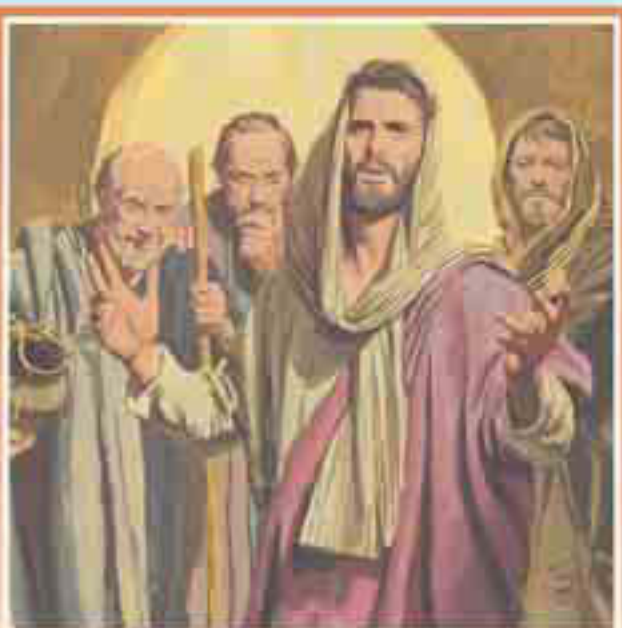
After the closing prayer Jackson went to turn on the computer. Maybe a video game would help him forget the growing uneasiness inside him.

But he couldn’t ignore the feeling he had. Did he really have a problem with video games? He didn’t spend much time with Chester or his other friends anymore. He had gotten a bad grade on a spelling test for the first time. He hadn’t read the scriptures all week. And he had missed the family movie. He knew it was time to apply tonight’s lesson to his own life.

Jackson turned away from the computer and went to his bedroom. He flopped down on his bed and opened his scriptures to Ether. The princess would have to wait. Right now he had some reading and thinking to do. □



THE GOOD SAMARITAN



ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAUL MANN

Jesus told many stories to teach people, to help them learn the truth.



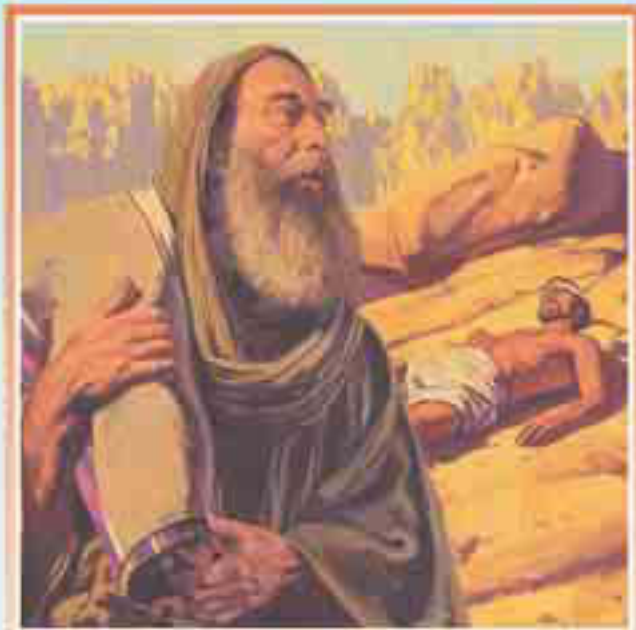
One day a leader of the Jews tried to trick Jesus. He asked Jesus how to get into heaven. The Savior asked what the scriptures said. The leader said a man should love God and should also love his neighbor. Jesus said he was right. Then the leader asked, "Who is my neighbor?"

Luke 10:25–29



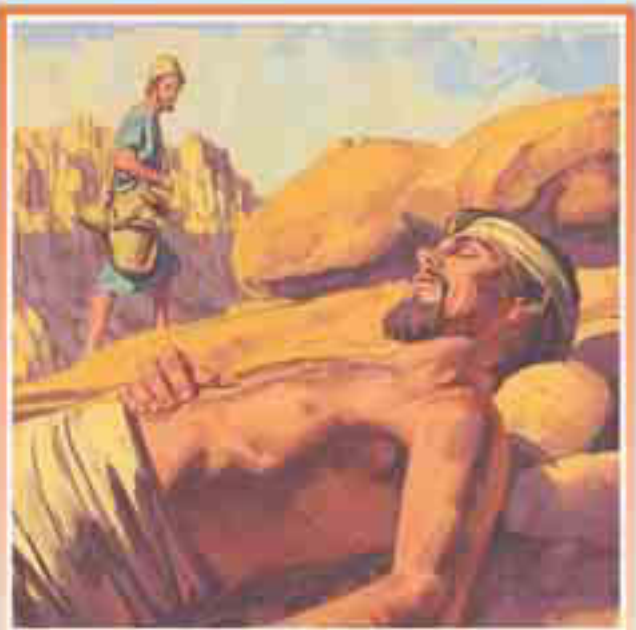
Jesus answered by telling a story about a Jew who was walking on a road to Jericho. Thieves stopped him, took his clothes, and beat him. They left him on the road, almost dead.

Luke 10:30



Soon a Jewish priest went by and saw the man. The priest should have helped him, but instead he walked by on the other side of the road.

Luke 10:31



A Jewish man who worked in the temple went by. He also should have helped the injured man. But he, too, walked by on the other side of the road.

Luke 10:32



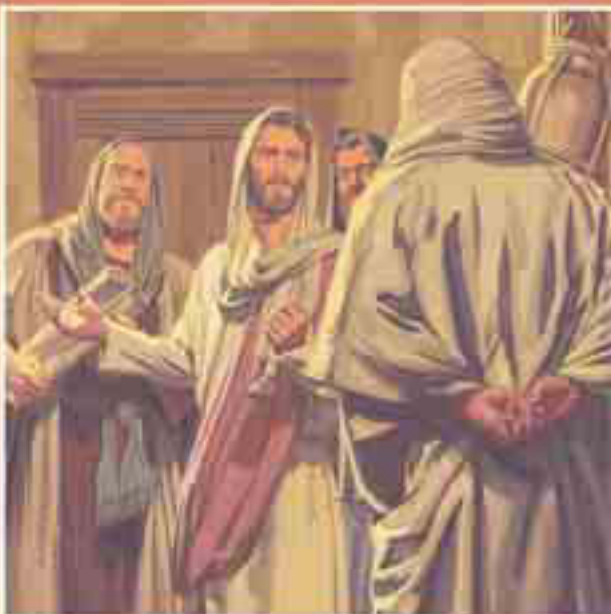
Then a Samaritan came along. The Jews and the Samaritans did not like each other. But when the Samaritan saw the man, he felt sorry for him. Even though he knew the man was a Jew, the Samaritan took care of his wounds and put clothes on him.

Luke 10:33–34; John 4:9; see also Bible Dictionary, “Samaritans,” 768



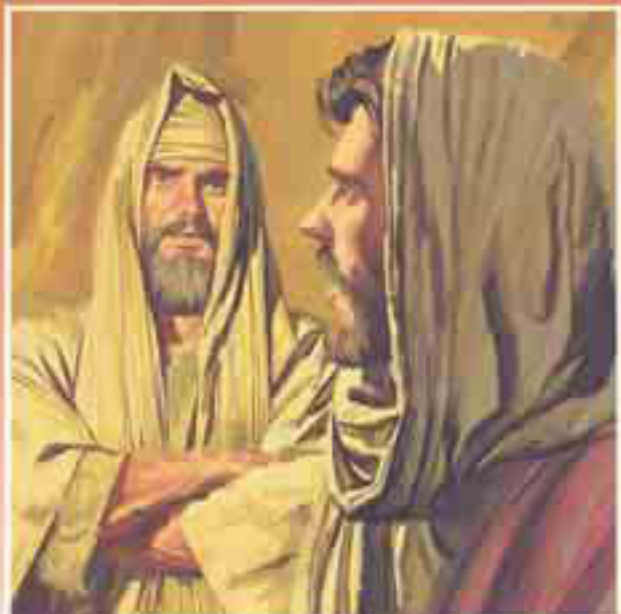
Then the Samaritan took the Jew to an inn and cared for him until the next day. When the Samaritan had to leave, he gave money to the innkeeper and told him to take care of the man.

Luke 10:34-35



This was the story Jesus told the leader of the Jews. Then He asked the leader which of the three men was the injured man's neighbor.

Luke 10:36



The leader said the Samaritan was the neighbor because he had helped. Jesus told the Jewish leader to be like the Samaritan.

Luke 10:37

THE TRANS-FIGURATION



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT T. BARRETT

Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the top of a high mountain to pray.

Matthew 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28



As Jesus prayed, the glory of God came upon Him, and His face shone like the sun. Two beings, Moses and Elias, appeared with Him. They talked with Him about His coming Crucifixion and Atonement.

Matthew 17:2–3; Mark 9:3–4; Luke 9:29–31



While Jesus was praying to His Father, the Apostles fell asleep.

Luke 9:32



When they awoke, they were able to see the glory of Jesus Christ, Moses, and Elias. They heard Heavenly Father's voice testify, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:32, 35



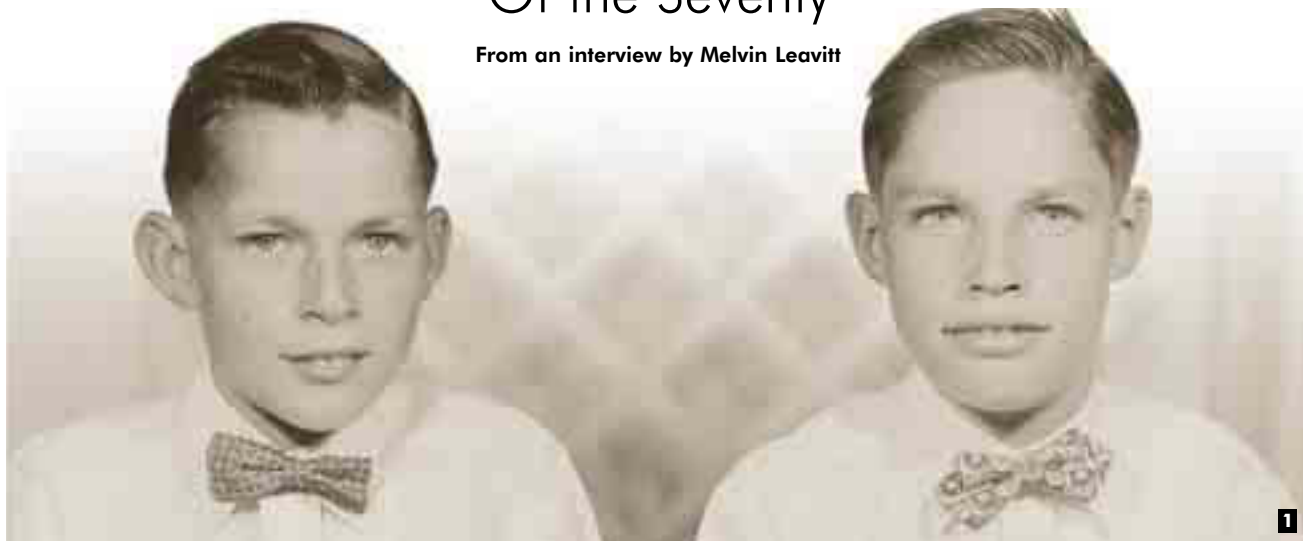
The Apostles were afraid and fell on their faces. Jesus touched them and told them not to fear. When they looked up, Jesus was alone. He told them to tell no one about what they had seen until after He had died and been resurrected.

Matthew 17:6-9; Mark 9:8-9

Elder Robert J. Whetten

Of the Seventy

From an interview by Melvin Leavitt



1



I grew up in Colonia Juárez, México, and had a happy childhood.

My twin brother, Bert (Albert), and I were the middle of 10 children. We rode horses and fished and swam in the river. We worked hard too, feeding

chickens, milking cows, and tending our father's orchards.

Our parents taught us about the purpose of life, where we came from, what happens after we die, and the consequences of our choices. I learned about the plan of salvation and about repentance as a constant process.

My parents often said to me, "Remember who you really are." I didn't understand at first, but I learned they meant for me to remember that I was a child of God.

I loved Primary. I can still remember those beautiful Primary songs we sang. When I was about 11, my friend Billy fell off a horse and died from his injuries. Our Primary class sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives" (*Hymns*, number 136) at his funeral. Those words burned deep into my soul. I knew Billy was all right, and I knew what we were singing was the truth.

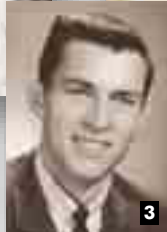
Bert and I grew up expecting to serve missions, and when we were old enough, we did. My mission made all the difference in the world to me. I gained a deeper understanding of the gospel, I developed discipline, and I learned to serve others. It has been the basis for a happy, successful life.

Three months after we returned from our missions, a man killed my twin brother. My father and another brother were badly wounded in the same attack. We knew who did it, but he was never arrested. I learned what it was like to feel hate and want revenge. I even had dreams of hurting the man who had done this terrible thing. But the Lord had made clear what He expected of me:

"Ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

"I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men" (D&C 64:9–10).

With time and prayer, I *did* forgive that man. We all did.



I was told as a child, “If you stay true and faithful, you can be with those great people who went before you who were true and faithful.” This teaching awoke in me a desire to be where our loved ones are who have passed on. Being true and faithful to the end became my goal, even as a young man.

Recently my son Carlos asked me, “Dad, what is your greatest fear?”

I said, “I guess my greatest fear would be that I might not be true and faithful to the end. That’s the worst thing that could ever happen.” Then I added, “My other worst fear would be that my children and my posterity that comes after would not be true and faithful.”

Heavenly Father wants family relationships to be forever. Turn your hearts to your parents. Spend time with them. Ask them to tell you about your grandparents and great-grandparents. When I read the stories of my forebears, I gain great inspiration and a renewed desire to live worthily.

Children, please listen to your parents. There are so many things to listen to—television, music, movies, the Internet. Be sure that you listen to those who really love you—your parents, your bishop, your Primary teacher, the living prophet, and above all, Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

1. At age 10 (left) with his twin brother, Albert. 2. At a baptism in 1963. 3. As a missionary at age 19. 4. On his wedding day with his wife, Raquel. 5. With his family at a daughter’s wedding.

My parents taught me the importance of family relationships. I can remember my mother saying, “Bobby, you and Bert must have been good friends in the premortal life for Heavenly Father to let you come together in the same family at the same time. Now can’t you get along a little better?”

My wife, Raquel, and I have 8 children and 12 grandchildren. They are our greatest joy in life. My oldest grandson, Mario, lives in Guadalajara, México. One day his Primary teacher asked, “Mario, who loves you?”

He answered without hesitation, “Jesus and my grandfather love me.” He was right. The essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ is love. We love those we serve, and we serve those we love. It all starts in the home. Jesus told us to love our neighbor, and who are our closest neighbors? Our own families. My brothers and sisters are still my best friends. I love my extended family too, including my 130 first cousins. Tell your parents you love them. Tell your grandparents you love them. Then show them by your actions that you really mean it.

My parents told me, “Remember that your Heavenly Father wants you to come back to Him.” Children, please remember that too. It’s like when parents send a child to school in the morning—they want and expect him or her to come home in the afternoon. Our Heavenly Father sent us here to earth to learn, and He wants us to come back home to Him when our schooling on earth is over. Someday I want to be where my father and mother and Bert are. I want to go home. □



Scripture Block

By Scott Sudbury

Instructions

1. Mount the scripture block on lightweight cardboard, cut along the broken lines, and fold on the solid lines to form a block. Fold the tabs in, and glue them together.

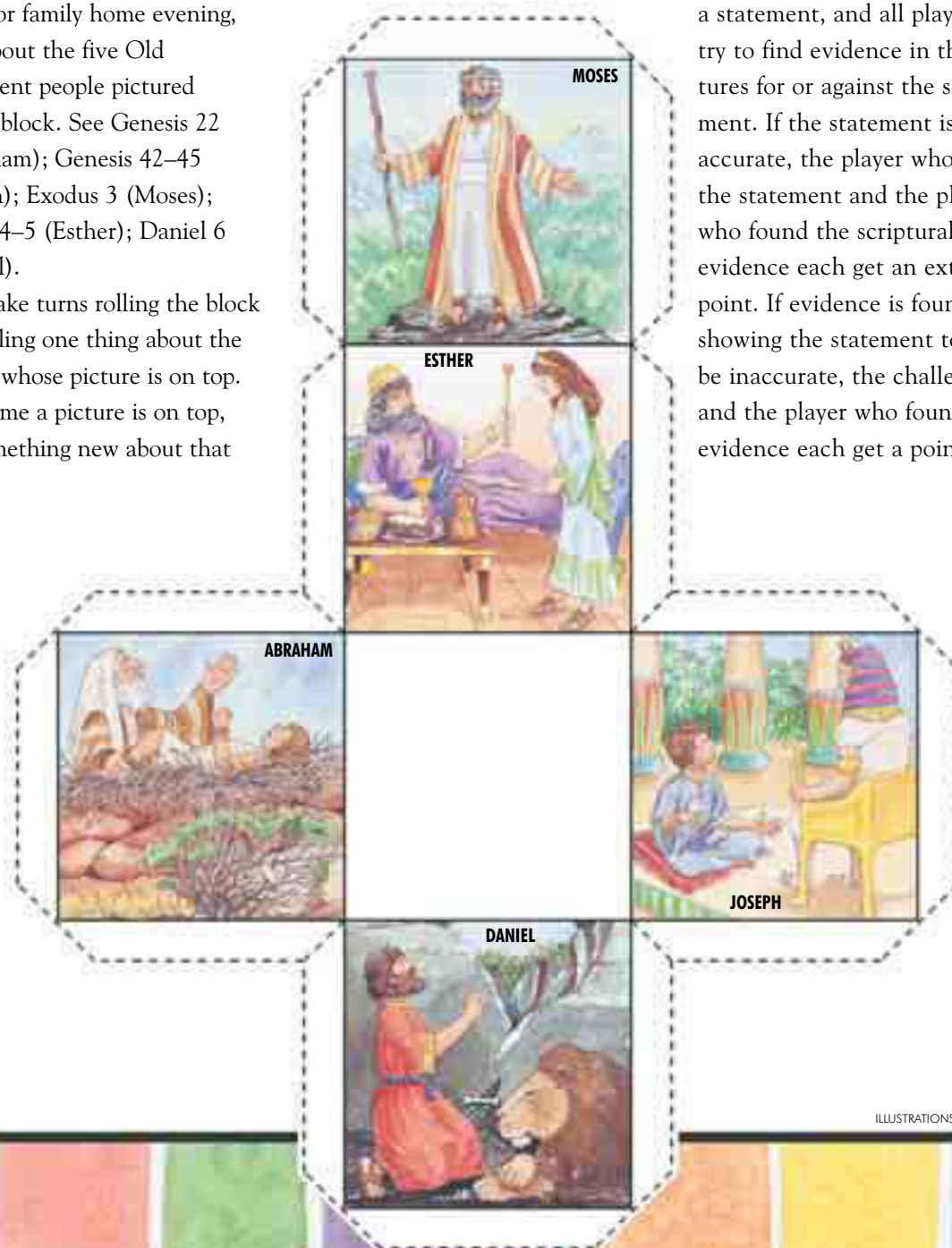
2. For family home evening, read about the five Old Testament people pictured on the block. See Genesis 22 (Abraham); Genesis 42–45 (Joseph); Exodus 3 (Moses); Esther 4–5 (Esther); Daniel 6 (Daniel).

3. Take turns rolling the block and telling one thing about the person whose picture is on top. Each time a picture is on top, tell something new about that

person. If the blank side is on top, tell about an Old Testament person not shown on the block.

4. *Variation for older players:* Give one point for each correct statement. Any player may challenge

a statement, and all players then try to find evidence in the scriptures for or against the statement. If the statement is accurate, the player who made the statement and the player who found the scriptural evidence each get an extra point. If evidence is found showing the statement to be inaccurate, the challenger and the player who found the evidence each get a point. □





Moses Found in the Bulrushes by Pharaoh's Daughter, by George Soper

COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART

“And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; . . . and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him” (Exodus 2:5–6).



“How do we serve Him who made it possible for us to gain eternal life? . . . King Benjamin provided the answer when he counseled the people, ‘When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.’” See Elder L. Tom Perry, “Learning to Serve,” page 10.

