

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

LIAHONA



LIAHONA



ON THE COVER

Photography by Jerry Garns. *Front:* Missionaries in Barcelona, Spain. *Back:* Missionaries in Honduras.



THE FRIEND COVER

Saving money is one way to prepare to be a missionary. See "I Can Be a Missionary Now!" page 8.

SEE PAGE 34



FEATURES

- 2 **FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE: HALLMARKS OF A HAPPY HOME**
PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON
- 25 **VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE: SAFETY IN KEEPING DIVINE COVENANTS**
- 26 **MISSIONARY WORK AND THE ATONEMENT** ELDER JEFFREY R. HOLLAND
- 44 **LATTER-DAY SAINT VOICES: LIVING THE ADVENTURE**
A TREASURE OF LOVE ROMY BAZALAR COTERA
CAUGHT BY SURPRISE WANG SHU-CHUAN
"GIVE US A BLESSING!" LESLY AUGUSTO TOBAR CORREA
- 48 **USING THE OCTOBER 2001 LIAHONA**

ESPECIALLY FOR YOUTH

- 10 **LATTER-DAY PROPHETS SPEAK ABOUT MISSIONARY SERVICE**
- 12 **YOUR MISSION—A SPIRITUAL ADVENTURE** ELDER DAVID B. HAIGHT
- 17 **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: HOW CAN I HELP MY FRIENDS UNDERSTAND WHY I WANT TO SERVE A MISSION?**
- 20 **IT'S YOUR CALL** BARBARA JEAN JONES
- 24 **GETTING READY**
- 33 **POSTER: BE YOUR BEST**
- 34 **THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP** F. DAVID STANLEY
- 38 **IN THE MTC** MARVIN K. GARDNER

THE FRIEND

- 2 **FRIEND TO FRIEND: ELDER WAYNE M. HANCOCK**
- 4 **NEW TESTAMENT STORIES: DOING HIS FATHER'S WORK ON EARTH; JESUS FEEDS 5,000 PEOPLE**
- 8 **I CAN BE A MISSIONARY NOW!** CORLISS CLAYTON
- 10 **SONG: TRUTH FROM ELIJAH** VANJA Y. WATKINS
- 12 **SHARING TIME: PROMISED BLESSINGS** DIANE S. NICHOLS
- 14 **NO BULLS IN THE DITCH** SHEILA R. AND FRANCIS M. WOODARD



SEE PAGE 38

October 2001 Vol. 25 No. 10
LIAHONA 21990
Official English International Magazine of The Church
of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The First Presidency: Gordon B. Hinckley,
Thomas S. Manson, James E. Faust

Quorum of the Twelve: Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry,
David B. Haight, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson,
Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin,
Richard G. Scott, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland,
Henry B. Eyring

Editor: Dennis B. Neuenschwander
Advisers: J. Kent Jolley, W. Rolfe Kerr, Stephen A. West

Curriculum Department Administrators:
Managing Director: Ronald L. Knighton
Editorial Director: Richard M. Romney
Graphics Director: Allan R. Loyborg

Editorial Staff:
Managing Editor: Marvin K. Gardner
Assistant Managing Editor: R. Val Johnson
Associate Editor: Roger Terry
Assistant Editor: Jenifer Greenwood
Editorial Associate: Susan Barrett
Publications Assistant: Collette Nebeker Aune

Design Staff:
Magazine Graphics Manager: M. M. Kawasaki
Art Director: Scott Van Kampen
Senior Designer: Sharri Cook
Designers: Thomas S. Child, Randall J. Pixton
Production Manager: Jane Ann Peters
Production: Reginald J. Christensen, Denise Kirby,
Kelli Pratt, Rolland F. Sparks, Kari A. Todd,
Claudia E. Warner
Digital Prepress: Jeff Martin

Printing and Distribution:
Printing Director: Kay W. Briggs
Distribution Director (Subscriptions): Kris T. Christensen

For subscriptions and prices outside the United States
and Canada, contact your local Church distribution
center or ward or branch leader.

Send manuscripts and queries to *Liahona*, Floor 24,
50 East North Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223,
USA; or e-mail: CUR-Liahona-IMag@ldschurch.org

The *Liahona* (a Book of Mormon term meaning
"compass" or "director") is published in Albanian,
Armenian (East), Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chinese, Czech,
Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Fijian, Finnish, French,
German, Haitian, Hiligaynon, Hungarian, Icelandic,
Ilokano, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kiribati, Korean,
Latvian, Lithuanian, Malagasy, Marshallese, Mongolian,
Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian,
Samoan, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog,
Tahitian, Thai, Tongan, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.
(Frequency varies by language.)

© 2001 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America.

For Readers in the United States and Canada:
October 2001 Vol. 25 No. 10. LIAHONA (USPS 311-
480) English (ISSN 1080-9554) is published monthly by
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 East
North Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84150. USA subscription
price is \$10.00 per year; Canada, \$15.50 plus applicable
taxes. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah, and
at additional mailing offices. Sixty days' notice required for
change of address. Include address label from a recent
issue; old and new address must be included. Send USA
and Canadian subscriptions to Salt Lake Distribution
Center at address below. Subscription help line:
1-800-537-5971. Credit card orders (Visa, MasterCard,
American Express) may be taken by phone. (Canada Poste
Information: Publication Agreement #1604821)

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Salt Lake
Distribution Center, Church Magazines, PO Box 26368,
Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368.



ENJOYS LIAHONA'S MORAL CONTENT

For some time I have received the *Liahona* (Italian) from some Latter-day Saint friends. I enjoy reading it very much. It contains beautiful messages of good moral content, especially family values. I think the articles are good for all of us, whatever our religion might be.

*Vincenzo Cerceo,
A friend of the Church in Trieste, Italy*

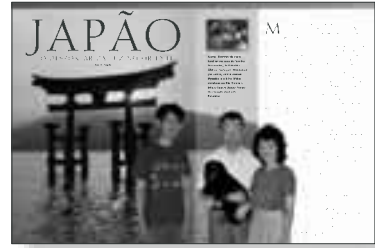
GOD HAS TRACED THE DESIGN

In the face of terrible trials, just one thing counts: to have the faith, the will, and the strength to follow God.

Job submitted to God. In the days of his pain, he learned to know himself and to know God. God's purpose was to bless him in the end. He healed Job, restored him completely, and restored to him what he had lost.

God works as if our lives were a work of embroidery. We see only the back of the piece—the tied and cut threads. He has a view of the whole work. He has traced the design and has included the black threads that make the vibrant colors beautiful.

*Guy A. Madec,
Evreux Branch,
Caen France District*



EXAMPLES OF FAITH AND DEVOTION

Through *A Liahona* (Portuguese), we get to know about Church members all across the world. In spite of our differences in academic, social, or cultural circumstances, we can see how the knowledge and testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ have influenced their lives. Their examples of faith and devotion then influence our lives for good.

*Leonilda Venturini,
Matão Ward,
Campinas Brazil Castelo Stake*

A CONNECTION TO ALL THAT IS GOOD

When I was baptized in 1976 in Córdoba, Argentina, I started collecting copies of the *Liahona* (Spanish). Although my life has taken me to different places, I have never been without my beloved magazines. The *Liahona* contains answers, just as the scriptures do. In the various stages of my life and in my various callings and assignments, I have always been able to go to the *Liahona* for comfort, guidance, inspiration, lesson support, missionary gifts, and companionship. Thank you for being my connection to all that is good.

*Luisa Cecilia Bonnet de Bamio,
Nueva Segovia Ward,
Barquisimeto Venezuela Stake*



HALLMARKS OF A HAPPY HOME

By President Thomas S. Monson

First Counselor in the First Presidency



Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God.”¹

This description of such a universal goal was provided by the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was relevant then. It is relevant now. With such a clear road map to follow, why then are there so many unhappy people? Frequently, frowns outnumber smiles and despair dampens joy. We live so far below the level of our divine possibilities. Some become confused by materialism, entangled by sin, and lost among the passing parade of humanity. Others cry out in the words of the convert of Philip of old: “How can I [find my way], except some man should guide me?”²

Happiness does not consist of a glut of luxury, the world’s idea of a “good time.” Nor must we search for it in faraway places with strange-sounding names. Happiness is found at home.

If we really try, our home can be a bit of heaven here on earth.

All of us remember the home of our childhood. Interestingly, our thoughts do not dwell on whether the house was large or small, the neighborhood fashionable or downtrodden. Rather, we delight in the experiences we shared as a family. The home is the laboratory of our lives, and what we learn there largely determines what we do when we leave there.

Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, former prime minister of Great Britain, expressed the profound philosophy: “The family is the building block of society. It is a nursery, a school, a hospital, a leisure center, a place of refuge and a place of rest. It encompasses the whole of the society. It fashions our beliefs; it is the preparation for the rest of our life.”³

“Home is where the heart is.” It *does* take “a heap o’ livin’” to make a house a home.⁴ “Home! home! sweet, sweet home! . . . Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home.”⁵ We turn from the reverie of such pleasant recollections. We contemplate parents gone, family grown, childhood vanished. Slowly but surely we face the truth that we are responsible for the home we build. We must build wisely, for eternity is not a short voyage. There will be calm and wind, sunlight and shadows, joy and sorrow. But

if we really try, our home can be a bit of heaven here on earth. The thoughts we think, the deeds we do, the lives we live influence not only the success of our earthly journey; they mark the way to our eternal goals.

In 1995 the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles issued a proclamation to the world concerning the family. This proclamation states, in part: "Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities."⁶

Happy homes come in a variety of appearances. Some feature large families with father, mother, brothers, and sisters living together in a spirit of love. Others consist of a single parent with one or two children, while other homes have but one occupant. There are, however, identifying features which are to be found in a happy home, whatever the number or description of its family members. I refer to these as "Hallmarks of a Happy Home." They consist of:

1. **A pattern of prayer.**
2. **A library of learning.**
3. **A legacy of love.**
4. **A treasury of testimony.**

A PATTERN OF PRAYER

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed."⁷ So universal is its application, so beneficial its result, that prayer qualifies as the number-one hallmark of a happy home. As parents listen to the prayer of a child, they too draw close to God. These little ones, who so recently have been with their Heavenly Father, have no



When we are considering how to bring heaven closer to our home, we can learn from the Lord. He is the master architect. He has taught us how we must build.

inhibitions in expressing to Him their feelings, their wishes, their thanks.

Family prayer is the greatest deterrent to sin, and hence the most beneficent provider of joy and happiness. The old saying is yet true: "The family that prays together stays together."

Our prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, has stated: "Fortunate, indeed, is the boy or the girl, including those in their teens, in whose homes there is the practice of morning and evening family prayer."⁸

Will you join me as we look in on a typical Latter-day Saint family offering prayers unto God. Father, mother, and each of the children kneel, bow their heads, and close their eyes. A sweet spirit of love, unity, and peace fills the home. As father hears his tiny son pray that his dad will do the right things, do you think that such a father would find it difficult to honor the prayer of his precious son? As a teenage daughter hears her sweet mother plead that her daughter will be inspired in the choice of her companions, that she will prepare herself for a temple marriage, don't you believe that such a daughter will seek to honor this humble, pleading petition of her mother, whom she so dearly loves? When father, mother, and each of the children earnestly pray that the fine sons in the family will live worthy that they may in due time receive a call to serve as ambassadors of the Lord in the mission fields of the Church, don't we begin to see how such sons grow to young manhood with an overwhelming desire to serve as missionaries?



As we offer our family prayers and our personal prayers, let us do so with faith and trust in Him. If any of us has been slow to hearken to the counsel to pray always, there is no finer hour to begin than now. Those who feel that prayer might denote a physical weakness should remember that a man never stands taller than when he is upon his knees.

My wife, Frances, and I have been married 53 years. Our marriage took place in the Salt Lake Temple. He who performed the ceremony, Benjamin Bowring, counseled us: “May I offer you newlyweds a formula which will ensure that any disagreement you may have will last no longer than one day? Every night kneel by the side of your bed. One night, Brother Monson, you offer the prayer, aloud, on bended knee. The next night you, Sister Monson, offer the prayer, aloud, on bended knee. I can then assure you that any misunderstanding that develops during the day will vanish as you pray. You simply can’t pray together and retain any but the best of feelings toward one another.”

When I was called to the Council of the Twelve Apostles 38 years ago, President David O. McKay, ninth President of the Church, asked me concerning my family. I related to him this guiding formula of prayer and bore witness to its validity. He sat back in his large leather chair and, with a smile, responded, “The same

formula that has worked for you has blessed the lives of my family during all these years of our marriage.”

Prayer is the passport to spiritual power.

A LIBRARY OF LEARNING

A second hallmark of a happy home is discovered when home is a library of learning. Whether we are preparing to establish our own family or simply considering how to bring heaven closer to our present home, we can learn from the Lord. He is the master architect. He has taught us how we must build.

When Jesus walked the dusty pathways of towns and villages that we now reverently call the Holy Land and taught His disciples by beautiful Galilee, He often spoke in parables, in language the people understood best. Frequently He referred to home building in relationship to the lives of those who listened.

He declared, “Every . . . house divided against itself shall not stand.”⁹ Later He cautioned, “Behold, mine house is a house of order . . . and not a house of confusion.”¹⁰

In a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith at Kirtland, Ohio, December 27, 1832, the Master counseled, “Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a



house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God.”¹¹

Where could any of us locate a more suitable blueprint whereby we could wisely and properly build? Such a house would meet the building code outlined in Matthew, even a house built “upon a rock,”¹² a house capable of withstanding the rains of adversity, the floods of opposition, and the winds of doubt everywhere present in our challenging world.

Some might question, “But that revelation was to provide guidance for the construction of a temple. Is it relevant today?”

I would respond: “Did not the Apostle Paul declare, ‘Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?’”¹³

Let the Lord be our Guide for the family—even the home—we build.

An essential part of our learning library will be good books.

*Books are keys to wisdom’s treasure;
Books are gates to lands of pleasure;
Books are paths that upward lead;
Books are friends. Come, let us read.*¹⁴

Reading is one of the true pleasures of life. In our age of mass culture, when so much that we encounter is abridged, adapted, adulterated, shredded, and boiled down, it is mind-easing and mind-inspiring to sit down privately with a congenial book.

Young children also enjoy books and love to have their parents read to them.

Are our examples worthy of emulation? Do we live in such a way that a son or a daughter may say, “I want to follow my dad,” or “I want to be like my mother”?

The Lord counseled, “Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”¹⁵

The standard works offer the library of learning to us and to our children.

Several years ago we took our grandchildren on an escorted tour of the Church printing facilities. There, all of us saw the missionary edition of the Book of Mormon coming off the delivery line—printed, bound, and trimmed, ready for reading. I told the grandchildren, “The operator says that you can remove one copy of the Book of Mormon to be your very own. You select the copy, and it will then be yours.”

Each removed one finished copy and expressed his or her love for the Book of Mormon.

I really don’t remember other events of that day, but I shall never forget the honest expressions of love for the Book of Mormon—expressions which came from the hearts of those children.

As parents, we should remember that our lives may be the book from the family library which the children most treasure. Are our examples worthy of emulation? Do we live in such a way that a son or a daughter may say, “I want to follow my dad,” or “I want to be like my mother”? Unlike the book on the library shelf, the covers of which shield the contents, our lives cannot be closed. Parents, we truly are an open book.

A LEGACY OF LOVE

A third hallmark of a happy home is a legacy of love.

As a small boy, I enjoyed visiting the home of my grandmother on Bueno Avenue in Salt Lake City. Grandmother



was always so happy to see us and to draw us close to her. Seated on her lap, we listened as she read to us.

Her youngest son, my Uncle Ray, and his wife occupied that same home after my grandmother passed away. On a visit to see my Uncle Ray last year, just before he passed away, I noticed that the fireplug on the curb seemed small compared to its size when I climbed its lofty heights those long years ago. The friendly porch was the same; the quiet, peaceful atmosphere not altered. Hanging on the kitchen wall was a framed expression which my aunt had embroidered. It carried a world of practical application: "Choose your love; love your choice." Very often this will take compromise, forgiveness, perhaps apology. We must ever be committed to the success of our marriage.

Seemingly little lessons of love are observed by children as they silently absorb the examples of their parents. My own father, a printer, worked long and hard practically every day of his life. I'm certain that on the Sabbath he would have enjoyed just being at home. Rather, he visited elderly family members and brought cheer into their lives.

One was his uncle, who was crippled by arthritis so severe that he could not walk or care for himself. On a Sunday afternoon Dad would say to me, "Come along, Tommy; let's take Uncle Elias for a short drive." Boarding

the old 1928 Oldsmobile, we would proceed to Eighth West, where, at the home of Uncle Elias, I would wait in the car while Dad went inside. Soon he would emerge from the house, carrying in his arms like a china doll his crippled uncle. I then would open the door and watch how tenderly and with such affection my father would place Uncle Elias in the front seat so he would have a fine view while I occupied the rear seat.

The drive was brief and the conversation limited, but oh, what a legacy of love! Father never read to me from the Bible about the good Samaritan. Rather, he took me with him and Uncle Elias in that old 1928 Oldsmobile along the road to Jericho.

When our homes carry the legacy of love, we will not receive Jacob's chastisement as recorded in the Book of Mormon: "Ye have broken the hearts of your tender wives, and lost the confidence of your children, because of your bad examples before them; and the sobbings of their hearts ascend up to God against you."¹⁶

May our homes reflect a legacy of love.

A TREASURY OF TESTIMONY

A fourth hallmark of a happy home is a treasury of testimony. "The first and foremost opportunity for teaching



**Let us open wide the windows
of our hearts, that each family
member may feel welcome
and “at home.”**

in the Church lies in the home,”¹⁷ observed President David O. McKay. “A true Mormon home is one in which if Christ should chance to enter, he would be pleased to linger and to rest.”¹⁸

What are we doing to ensure that our homes meet this description? It isn’t enough for parents alone to have strong testimonies. Children can ride only so long on the coattails of a parent’s conviction.

A love for the Savior, a reverence for His name, and genuine respect one for another will provide a fertile seedbed for a testimony to grow.

Learning the gospel, bearing a testimony, leading a family are rarely if ever simple processes. Life’s journey is characterized by bumps in the road, swells in the sea—even the turbulence of our times.

Some years ago, while visiting the members and missionaries in Australia, I witnessed a sublime example depicting how a treasury of testimony can bless and sanctify a home. The mission president, Horace D. Ensign, and I were traveling the long distance from Sydney to Darwin, where I was to break ground for our first chapel in that city. En route we had a scheduled stop at a mining community named Mount Isa. As we entered the small airport at Mount Isa, a woman and her two children approached. She said, “I am Judith Louden, a member of the Church, and these are my two children. We thought you might be on this flight, so we have come to visit with you during your brief stopover.” She explained that her husband was not a member of the Church and that she and the children were indeed the only members in the entire area. We shared lessons and bore testimony.

Time passed. As we prepared to reboard, Sister Louden looked so forlorn, so alone. She pleaded, “You can’t go yet; I have so missed the Church.” Suddenly the loudspeaker announced a 30-minute mechanical delay of our flight. Sister Louden whispered, “My prayer has just been answered.” She then asked how she

might influence her husband to show an interest in the gospel. We counseled her to include him in their home Primary lesson each week and be to him a living testimony of the gospel. I mentioned we would send to her a subscription to the *Children’s Friend* and additional helps for her family teaching. We urged that she never give up on her husband.

We departed Mount Isa, a city to which I have never returned. I shall, however, always hold dear in memory that sweet mother and those precious children extending a tear-filled expression and a fond wave of gratitude and good-bye.

Several years later, while speaking at a priesthood leadership meeting in Brisbane, Australia, I emphasized the significance of gospel scholarship in the home and the importance of living the gospel and being examples of the truth. I shared with the men assembled the account of Sister Louden and the impact her faith and determination had made on me. As I concluded, I said, “I suppose I’ll never know if Sister Louden’s husband ever joined the Church, but he couldn’t have found a better model to follow.”

One of the leaders raised his hand, then stood and declared, “Brother Monson, I am Richard Louden. The woman of whom you speak is my wife. The children [his voice quavered] are our children. We are a forever family



now, thanks in part to the persistence and the patience of my dear wife. She did it all.” Not a word was spoken. The silence was broken only by sniffles and marked by many tears.

My brothers and sisters, let us determine, whatever our circumstance, to make of our houses happy homes.

Let us open wide the windows of our hearts, that each family member may feel welcome and “at home.” Let us open also the doors of our very souls, that the dear Christ may enter. Remember His promise: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him.”¹⁹

How welcome He will feel, how joyful will be our lives, when the “Hallmarks of a Happy Home” greet Him, even:

- A pattern of prayer,
- A library of learning,
- A legacy of love,
- A treasury of testimony.

May our loving Heavenly Father bless all of us in our quest for such happy homes and forever families. □

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected by Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 255–56.
2. Acts 8:31.
3. Nicholas Wood, “Thatcher Champions the Family,” *London Times*, 26 May 1988.
4. Edgar A. Guest, “Home,” in *The Family Book of Best Loved Poems*, edited by David L. George (1952), 151–52.

5. John Howard Payne, “Mid Pleasures and Palaces,” *Hymns* (1948), number 107.

6. *Liahona*, October 1998, 24.

7. James Montgomery, “Prayer Is the Soul’s Sincere Desire,” *Hymns* (1985), number 145.

8. “The Environment of Our Homes,” *Tambuli*, October–November 1985, 5.

9. Matthew 12:25.

10. D&C 132:8.

11. D&C 88:119.

12. Matthew 7:25.

13. 1 Corinthians 3:16.

14. Emilie Poulsson.

15. D&C 88:118.

16. Jacob 2:35.

17. *Priesthood Home Teaching Handbook*, revised edition (1967), ii–iii.

18. In Conference Report, October 1947, 120; or *Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay* (1953), 169.

19. Revelation 3:20.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

1. The hallmarks for a happy home apply to all families, large and small, and those with but one occupant.
2. Prayer is the passport to spiritual power.
3. The standard works of the Church are the “best books” from which to seek learning.
4. Caring for family members is a legacy we should all strive to achieve.
5. A love of the Savior, a reverence for His name, and a genuine respect for one another provide a fertile seedbed for a testimony to grow in the home.



Latter-day Prophets Speak about Missionary Service

The missionaries pictured below became Presidents of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Following are some of their experiences and testimonies about missionary work.

JOSEPH SMITH, BY AVIN GITTINS



JOSEPH SMITH (1805–44)
First President of the Church

“Our missionaries are going forth to different nations, and in Germany, Palestine, New Holland, Australia, the East Indies, and other places, the Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done” (*History of the Church*, 4:540).



WILFORD WOODRUFF (1807–98)
Fourth President of the Church

As a missionary in England, Wilford Woodruff was blessed for his obedience. He recorded: “I asked the Lord what He wanted of me. He merely said, ‘Go to the south.’ I got into the stage and rode eighty miles. The first man’s house I stopped at was John Benbow’s in Herefordshire. In half an hour after I entered the house I

knew exactly why the Lord had sent me. There was a people there who had been praying for the ancient order of things. They were waiting for the Gospel as it was taught by Christ and His Apostles. The consequence was, the first thirty days after I got there I baptized six hundred of those people. In eight month’s labor in that country I brought eighteen hundred into the Church. Why? Because there was a people prepared for the Gospel, and the Lord had sent me there to do that work” (*Deseret Weekly*, 7 November 1896, 643; quoted in Howard W. Hunter, “Developing Spirituality,” *Ensign*, May 1979, 24).



GEORGE ALBERT SMITH (1870–1951)
Eighth President of the Church

While serving in the Southern States Mission, George Albert Smith learned that the Lord truly does protect those who serve Him. After preaching the gospel in a rural area, Elder Smith and five other missionaries were awakened at midnight by shouting from an angry crowd outside. The mob surrounded the building and began firing into it. President Smith later recorded: “Splinters were flying over our heads in every direction. . . . I felt absolutely no terror. I was very calm

as I lay there, experiencing one of the most horrible events of my life, but I was sure that as long as I was preaching the word of God and following his teachings that the Lord would protect me, and he did" (*A Story to Tell* [1945], 155–56).



DAVID O. MCKAY (1873–1970)
Ninth President of the Church

David O. McKay's witness of the truthfulness of the gospel came during his mission to Scotland. He attended a priesthood meeting where "everybody felt the rich outpouring of the spirit of the Lord." He later recalled: "Never before had I experienced such an emotion. It was a manifestation for which as a doubting youth I had secretly prayed most earnestly on hillside and in meadow. It was an assurance to me that sincere prayer is answered 'sometime, somewhere.'" It was during this same conference that Elder McKay's mission president told him, "If you will keep the faith you will yet sit in the leading [councils] of the Church" ("Two Significant Statements," *Deseret News*, 27 October 1934, 8).



EZRA TAFT BENSON (1899–1994)
Thirteenth President of the Church

Missionary work was difficult in England in the 1920s. Thus, when Elder Ezra Taft Benson and his companion received an invitation to speak in a sacrament meeting including both members and nonmembers, they fasted and prayed. "The hall was filled," President Benson later recalled. "My companion had planned to talk on the first principles, and I had studied hard in preparation for a talk on the Apostasy. There was a wonderful spirit in the meeting. . . . When I sat down, I realized that I had not mentioned the

Apostasy. I had talked about the Prophet Joseph Smith and had borne my witness of his divine mission and of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon." After the meeting, several people came to the missionaries and said, "Tonight we received a witness that Mormonism is true. We are now ready to consider baptism." President Benson said, "It was while I was on my first mission that I discovered the constant need for dependence on the Lord" ("Our Commission to Take the Gospel to All the World," *Ensign*, May 1984, 44).



GORDON B. HINCKLEY (1910–)
Fifteenth President of the Church

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, when few young men were serving missions, Gordon B. Hinckley was called to England. Shortly after his arrival, he became discouraged and felt he was wasting his time and his father's money. He wrote to his father, who replied, "I have only one suggestion: forget yourself and go to work." President Hinckley recalls: "[I] got on my knees and made a pledge with the Lord. I covenanted that I would try to forget myself and lose myself in His service. That July day in 1933 was my day of decision. A new light came into my life and a new joy into my heart" ("Taking the Gospel to Britain: A Declaration of Vision, Faith, Courage, and Truth," *Ensign*, July 1987, 7).

Years later, he said of his mission: "How profoundly grateful I am. . . . In the course of that experience, there became riveted into my very being a conviction and knowledge that this is in very deed the true and living work of God, restored through a prophet for the blessing of all who will accept it and live its principles" ("The Question of a Mission," *Ensign*, May 1986, 40). □

YOUR MISSION— A SPIRITUAL ADVENTURE



Your mission is something you will always remember fondly—worth any sacrifice you may have to make.

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

The ultimate goal of missionary work in the Church is to invite all the inhabitants of the earth to come unto Christ. Six billion people throughout the world are waiting to hear the message of the restored gospel. We are the people so blessed with the charge and responsibility to carry forth that invitation and message.

Every week, nearly 800 recommendations to serve missions arrive at the Church's Missionary Department in Salt Lake City. These recommendations indicate the faith and obedience of young men and women worldwide in response to the Savior's declaration of responsibility.

Not long after the stake or mission president recommends a prospective missionary, that long-awaited letter—the call to serve a mission—arrives in the mailbox.

Included in the packet is a page that may go unnoticed at first. It is a form, the Missionary Call Acceptance. This is a personal letter in which the missionary, addressing the First Presidency, formally accepts his or her missionary call. The form contains 15 lines on which the missionary expresses feelings about the singular opportunity of serving the Lord. The letters are usually handwritten, brief, and direct. Yet these few words speak volumes and convey deep meaning. Behind each one is a faith-promoting story.

"My Savior has blessed me more than I ever imagined. He gave His life for me. The least I can do is give Him two years of my life."

The letters frequently contain expressions of faith in

the Savior and gratitude for His sacrifice. The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote, "It is faith, and faith only, which is the moving cause of all action" (*Lectures on Faith* [1985], 1–2). Faith, to be saving faith, must center in Christ and move one to obey Him, to follow His example. In accepting a call to serve, the missionary is expressing sufficient faith to act on his or her beliefs. Blessings will inevitably follow, as so many returned missionaries can testify. Faith in the Savior becomes an anchor to the soul.

"I can't express the happiness and joy I feel as I accept this call to serve. I am ready and willing to commit two years of my life to preaching the gospel."

In the acceptance letter, many missionaries state, "I gratefully accept my call to serve." But I wonder how many missionaries realize the implications of the word *accept*. It means to receive willingly something given or offered; to respond favorably; to consider right and proper. It also means to be admitted into a group or community. In a gospel sense, it implies submission to the will of the Lord and willingness to follow the prophet, who extends the call. The mission "call" is to serve the Lord with all one's heart, might, mind, and strength. The

To embark on a mission involves many of the same emotions as embarking on some high adventure: excitement, some anxiety, perhaps a touch of fear. In missionary work, we take a step into the unknown.





mission “assignment” is to serve in the assigned field of labor. The acceptance letter signifies willingness to accept both the call and the assignment as the Lord’s will.

“Preparing for my mission has been a long struggle. After deciding to serve a mission, it took almost one and one-half years to overcome problems in my conduct.”

Some letters describe long periods of repentance—experiences like Alma’s, in which he was “racked with torment” and “harrowed up by the memory of [his] many sins” (Alma 36:17). Gratefully, they also speak of the “exquisite and sweet” joy that comes through repentance and forgiveness (see Alma 36:21).

The Lord commands His missionaries to be clean: “Purify your hearts before me; and then go ye into all the world, and preach my gospel unto every creature who has not received it” (D&C 112:28). The sacred powers available to those who are “ordained of God and sent forth” can be exercised only by those who are “purified and cleansed from all sin” (see D&C 50:26–28).

The First Presidency has stated: “Full-time missionary service is a privilege, not a right, for those who are called through inspiration by the President of the Church. Missionary service is literally service to the Lord and His Church. Its objective is not primarily the personal development of an individual missionary, although righteous service invariably produces that result” (letter, 12 December 2000). Priesthood leaders have specific guidelines to ensure that missionaries are spiritually, physically, emotionally, and morally qualified to serve. It is a disservice to the Lord, to the Church, and to the prospective missionary to issue a call when the requirements are not met.

We appreciate the many young men and women who live worthy of a mission call. We have deep gratitude for those who repent and taste the sweet joy of the Atonement. We encourage those who are unable to serve

My own faith is continually strengthened by those who accept calls to serve God, who allow their love for the Lord to overshadow their fears, and who submit willingly to the call of our living prophet.

because of physical, emotional, or other reasons to seek other avenues of service, as might be suggested by parents and Church leaders.

“Deciding to go on a mission wasn’t easy. Having a strong passion for the game of baseball made it hard.”

Numerous acceptance letters speak of sacrifice. The young man quoted above was well on his way to fulfilling a lifelong dream to play baseball in college and then perhaps enjoy a career in professional baseball. After prayerful thought, however, the answer was certain: he was to serve the Lord. Once the decision was made, his priorities in life became clear.

The Prophet Joseph Smith stated, “It is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God” (*Lectures on Faith*, 69). The thought of giving up something we dearly treasure can be difficult, even painful. Yet the Lord abundantly compensates for any sacrifice.

Prospective missionaries write about giving up a prized car, a girlfriend, music, a lucrative job, and many other things. Too many allow such worldly treasures to blind them to spiritual opportunity and divert them from their foreordained mission. On the other hand, we are continually amazed and gratified by those who forsake all to serve the Lord.

“Just two short years ago, I did not have any purpose in life. When I walked the streets, I was scared that people would ask, ‘Who are you?’ Finally, two missionaries helped me find the love of Christ. I will find people who have the same feelings I had and show them the purpose of life.”

Mormon wrote, “Perfect love casteth out all fear” (Moroni 8:16). When prospective missionaries learn of life’s purpose and of the Lord’s love, they gain the courage to act in spite of fears. In doing so, they learn the fears were an illusion, a creation of their minds. The Lord repeatedly assures missionaries that He will give them strength to succeed in the face of obstacles. “He that trembleth under my power shall be made strong, and shall bring forth fruits of praise and wisdom” (D&C 52:17).

Here is what a few missionaries who are currently serving say about their decisions to serve.

**ELDER VICTOR MANUEL ESPINOZA SÁNCHEZ
FROM ABANCAY, PERÚ**

“Before my mission, I had only one year left to finish my medical studies at the university. When I told my friends I was going to leave for two years, they tried to talk me out of it. But in my heart I knew it was time to serve my mission. I am grateful I made that decision—and I know I am not wasting my time.”

SISTER YI YI TAM FROM HONG KONG

“I told my friends in Hong Kong that a mission is talking to other people so they can know more about Jesus Christ. They asked, ‘Why do they need to know more about Jesus Christ?’ And I said, ‘Because He wants us to be happy, very happy.’”

**ELDER JUSTIN MICHAEL COLLINGS
FROM PROVO, UTAH, USA**

“I never cease to be amazed, fascinated, edified, and inspired when I learn about the Prophet Joseph Smith, who ‘has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it’ (D&C 135:3). It’s a pretty bold testimony that we bear about Brother Joseph, but the work of the latter-day kingdom of God is a bold matter. We can testify that Jesus is the Son of the living God and that Joseph is His prophet without being apologetic and without ever having to excuse the simpleness of our belief.”

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) often stated, “Whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies.”

One young man spoke to his bishop about his fear that he would not be able to learn the discussions or to teach the gospel. He perceived himself as a poor representative of the Lord. Moses, Jeremiah, Enoch, and others had feelings of inadequacy about their callings. The Lord promised them, however, that He would strengthen them and give them the words that they should say (see Exodus 4:11–12; Jeremiah 1:7–9; Moses 6:32–34). Missionaries today have the same promise if they will conquer their fears and open their mouths. “Lift up your voices unto this people; speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts, and you shall not be confounded before men; for it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment, what ye shall say” (D&C 100:5–6).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said, “There is a spiritual adventure in doing missionary work” (“It Becometh Every Man,” *Ensign*, October 1977, 7). To embark on a mission, as so many know, involves many of the same emotions as embarking on some high adventure: excitement, some anxiety, perhaps a touch of fear. In missionary work, we take a step into the unknown. Perhaps we go to a faraway land with a strange culture. We are required to live continually with a companion we have never met before. And the essence of missionary work is meeting and talking to new people, bearing testimony of marvelous and wondrous things that they may find odd. In publicly taking such a stance, we place ourselves at risk of being mocked or scorned. Such is the nature of an adventure, and like many other adventures, we will talk fondly of it the rest of our lives.

Missionary Call Acceptance letters reveal a wealth of spirituality and faith. My own faith is continually strengthened by those who accept calls to serve God, who allow their love for the Lord to overshadow their fears, and who submit willingly to the call of our living prophet. I pray always that every eligible young man, and also every young woman who so desires, may experience the wondrous adventure of a mission. □

**SISTER ERIKA VŠIANSKÁ FROM BRNO,
CZECH REPUBLIC**

“One of the things that impressed my parents and me when we were taking the discussions was how good the missionaries were to us and how good they were to each other. I wanted to do the same for other people, that they may be happy and know that God loves all of us.”

**ELDER CÉSAR ARTURO RODRÍGUEZ HERNÁNDEZ
FROM OBREGÓN, MÉXICO**

“I left the university, work, Church callings, and my family and gave up dance tours to Europe and Asia. But I have been able to feel heaven and God more constantly in my heart.”

SISTER AYAKO ONO FROM SAPPORO, JAPAN

“I hope to touch the hearts of people through the gospel. I’m happy to have the Lord use me as His instrument.”

**ELDER KEITH J. SCHMIDT FROM SHERIDAN,
CALIFORNIA, USA**

“No other members of my family belong to the Church. When I first told them I was going to serve a mission, they said I would not be permitted to live with them when I returned home. Since then, their hearts have been softened, and they have almost become proud of their missionary son.”

**SISTER ALEXANDRINA BADEA FROM
BUCHAREST, ROMANIA**

“I love missionary work. I have a desire in my heart to help other people know the gospel of Jesus Christ because this gospel changed my life and my family’s lives. I want to help people realize that Heavenly Father loves all of us, all over the world.” □



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How Can I Help My Friends Understand Why I Want to Serve a Mission?

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

LIAHONA'S ANSWER

As a member of the Church, you may sometimes find it difficult to explain to others why you do certain things. People often mistakenly see the Lord's commandments as restrictive and harsh. Of course, we know that obeying the commandments brings happiness, growth, and protection.

The first step in explaining a mission to your friends is to tell them how important the gospel is in your life. Do you know of interests or activities your friends spend a lot of time on? Perhaps they are excellent students, athletes, or artists. Explain to them that just as they spend time studying, rehearsing, or practicing, you devote time to the Church. If appropriate, bear your testimony. Tell them that going on a mission is an expression of your commitment to the Lord and His gospel and of your desire to help others know the truth.

Next you could explain that while personal benefits are not the reason you are going on a mission, they come as an added blessing. Returned missionaries usually speak of things they learned, such as discipline, hard work, getting along with others, budgeting, and perseverance. Tell your friends that many missionaries also learn another language and live in another country. Most people would consider these experiences educational.

Most returned missionaries are enthusiastic about their missions and are eager to share their experiences. Your friends may be curious about what mission life is like. Meeting a returned missionary would allow them to see that most missionaries are grateful for the sacrifices they made and the blessings they received.

Take opportunities to be happy and positive in response to gospel

questions. Show others that you are excited about being a full-time missionary in the future by being a member missionary now.

READERS' ANSWERS

I tell my friends that I became acquainted with the Church through the missionaries. I tell them that missionary work is the way the Lord's gospel light is dispersed among the people—and that it is a great blessing to be involved in this labor of love. I tell them that I love them and all people throughout the world, and I want everyone to have the opportunity to receive the blessings of the gospel. I tell them about the indescribable joy that comes if you are able to help even one person (see D&C 18:15–16).

*Amis Kanlinsh,
Riga Central Branch,
Riga Latvia District*

A mission is a blessing for anyone who serves, because missions help us learn more of the gospel. But the greatest blessing is to help in bringing souls to Christ.

*Tahia Mou-Fa,
Uturoa Ward,
Raromatai Tahiti Stake*

With the help of the Holy Ghost, your love, faith, and testimony of the gospel will radiate in your countenance. Let those around you know that your source of happiness is the gospel, and the reason you want to be a missionary is to teach others how to obtain that same happiness.

*Chiang Ya-Lin,
Kaohsiung Sixth Ward,
Kaohsiung Taiwan Stake*

Tell your friends that all of us are brothers and sisters and you are going on a mission because you want to help people who don't know the gospel. Pray that Heavenly Father will help your friends understand.

*Yekaterina Rodionova,
St. Petersburg Tsentralny Branch,
St. Petersburg Russia North District*

The only way I can help my friends understand why I want to serve a mission is to show them the changes that have happened in my life since I came to know the gospel.

Many missionaries have told me that a mission brings many blessings.

Before they left, Heavenly Father gave them a lot of blessings, and they thought that when they went on a mission they would be paying Him back. But on their missions He gave them many more blessings.

*Yuliia Ihorivna Kosarets'ka,
Poltava Tsentralny Branch,
Ukraine Donetsk Mission*

My boss, classmates, neighbors, and relatives thought it was absurd for me to abandon work, studies, and family to teach of Jesus Christ. They became even more concerned when they learned I would not be paid for doing this.

I asked the Lord for help. I began to ask people: "What is the purpose of life? Why are we here? Where are we going?" I bore my testimony of the plan of salvation. I explained that many children of God are waiting for answers to these questions.

*Elder Carlos Eduardo Faria Boato,
Brazil Maceió Mission*

As I humbly prayed to God to soften my friends' hearts, I shared my testimony about the Church, my feelings about the Book of Mormon, and my great desire to participate in the Lord's work. As a result, some friends began to investigate the Church.

*May J. Ticong,
Lanang Ward,
Davao Philippines Buhangin Stake*



Arnis Kanlinsh



Tahia Mou-Fa



Chiang Ya-Lin



Yekaterina Rodionova



Yuliia Ihorivna Kosarets'ka



Elder Carlos Eduardo Faria Boato



May J. Ticong



Elder Mark Amiang



Sister Evelin Álvarez



Elder Roberto Pacheco



Elder Humberto Martins de Araújo Jr.



Benjamin Mulambo Wa Mulambo

At a good-bye party I shared my reasons for going on a mission. As I finished, my friends shed tears. I believe they were touched by the Spirit of the Lord. Today some of them are serving missions. Others are investigating the Church.

*Elder Mark Amiang,
Nigeria Lagos Mission*

My friend Eliana and I had our school and career plans made. But as I prayed about a mission, my prayers were answered in the affirmative. I told Eliana what the gospel had done for me. The influence of the Holy Ghost, which accompanied my simple testimony, helped her understand.

*Sister Evelin Álvarez,
Perú Trujillo Mission*

I explained how the gospel of Jesus Christ transformed my life and how I first heard about it from missionaries who had left everything behind to share these truths. I told my friends it was my turn to share the joy of the gospel.

*Elder Roberto Pacheco,
Perú Lima Central Mission*

Opportunities arose during high school to explain why I was planning to serve a mission and its importance in my life and in the lives of people I was going to meet. I even distributed Church literature that

helped my classmates understand the great importance of missionary service.

*Elder Humberto Martins de Araújo Jr.,
Brazil Curitiba Mission*

Certain things helped me bring my friends to an understanding of missions: prayer, the scriptures, and experiences I shared of witnessing changes in the lives of Heavenly Father's children.

*Benjamin Mulambo Wa Mulambo,
Binza Ward,
Kinshasa Democratic Republic of Congo Stake*

You can make the QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS section helpful by answering the question below. Please send your answer to arrive no later than 1 December 2001. Send it to QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS 12/01, Liahona, Floor 24, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223, USA; or e-mail to CUR-Liahona-IMag@ldschurch.org. Your answer may be typed or clearly written in your own language. For your answer to be considered, it must include your full name, age, home address, and ward and stake (or branch and district). If possible, please include a photograph of yourself; this photograph will not be returned. A representative selection of answers will be published. □

QUESTION: *I feel sad much of the time. What can I do to feel happier?*

It's Your CALL

By Barbara Jean Jones
PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY JED A. CLARK

From your first talk with the bishop or branch president until that exciting white envelope arrives—here's a look at what happens and when.

Without question, receiving the call is one of the most exciting—and agonizing—steps in a prospective missionary's life. If you have ever wondered what happens to the missionary recommendation papers during those few suspenseful weeks after they leave the stake or mission president's hands until they materialize as a mission call in the mailbox, read on. You'll learn what happens every step of the way and receive valuable information on how to complete your papers successfully.

COMPLETING YOUR PAPERS

About four months before you are able to leave on your mission, set an appointment with your bishop or branch president for a personal interview and to receive the missionary recommendation papers. These papers include a checklist for completing the papers, missionary recommendation and priesthood leaders' forms, health and dental records, and insurance forms.

On the missionary recommendation form, you will share information about yourself, including your background, your desire and ability to learn a language, your schooling, and how your mission will be financed. In order to provide a completely accurate portrayal of yourself, *you*—not your mom, not your dad—should fill

out this form. Be completely open and honest about your desires and abilities.

Attach to this form a photograph of yourself dressed and groomed according to missionary standards. Remember that, along with reading the personal information you provide, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will look at your picture as he seeks inspiration on where you are to be called. This photo will also be forwarded to your mission president after you are assigned. The first impression you give of yourself to the mission president is extremely important.

As you begin working on your recommendation form, set appointments right away with your dentist and doctor for evaluations. Seeing these health professionals early can save you from having to delay your mission if there are problems to be resolved. Your own and your doctor's thorough and frank assessments about your health on your medical forms are important considerations in your mission assignment.

When these forms are completed and any health problems resolved, see your bishop or branch president for another interview with him. If he feels you are worthy and ready, he will refer you to your stake or mission president for an interview. If there is any transgression in your life that has not yet been properly resolved, *don't*



delay seeking the help of your priesthood leaders. No prospective missionaries should suppose they can ignore an unresolved transgression and be at peace with themselves. If confession is put off, a mission call could be postponed or canceled. A missionary may be sent home in order to allow for proper time to fully complete the repentance process.

PROCESSING YOUR PAPERS

After your priesthood leaders have confirmed you are ready in every way to serve, they will complete the priesthood leader's comments and suggestions form and send the information to the area office. The information from the papers is input onto a computer disk using software provided by the Missionary Department. This electronic system allows the department to process some 35,000 calls a year.

The disk and hard copy of your recommendation are then sent from your area office to the Missionary Department in Salt Lake City, where the information from the disk is downloaded into the Missionary Department computer system. If the forms are incomplete or arrive more than 90 days before the date you are available to begin serving, they may be returned to your Area President with instructions to submit them again or remedy any problems.

Next, a committee of doctors reviews your health and dental records to be sure they are complete and to confirm you are physically and emotionally prepared to handle the rigors of a full-time mission.

After your recommendation forms have passed through these processes, you are ready to be assigned.



Begin with a personal interview with your bishop or branch president about four months before you are able to leave.



Fill out the forms yourself. Be accurate and honest, and attach a photograph of yourself dressed and groomed according to missionary standards.



Set up appointments with your doctor and dentist as soon as possible, so there won't be delays.



ASSIGNING YOUR CALL

Each missionary is called of God through the President of the Church. Specific mission assignments are made by members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who have been assigned and authorized to do so by the prophet.

Each week, depending on the number of missionaries to be assigned, two to four members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles meet in separate rooms at Church headquarters. There, after kneeling in prayer and asking for divine guidance, each sits down before a computer screen. On that screen, one at a time, prospective missionaries' pictures and personal information appear, along with the current needs of all of the Church's missions. Each missionary is personally assigned to a specific mission.

Elder Thomas S. Monson, while a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said, "This I know—divine inspiration attends such sacred assignments" ("The Army of the Lord," *Ensign*, May 1979, 36).

RECEIVING YOUR CALL

After you are called and assigned, your call letter and packet of mission information are soon mailed to you. The call process takes from two to six weeks, depending on where you live and the

Two to six weeks after your missionary papers are sent in, you will have the thrilling and spiritual experience of opening your call.

proper completion of your papers before they are sent in.

Anyone who has had the experience of opening a mission call knows what a thrilling and spiritual experience it can be. When Joel Hiller of Taylorsville, Utah, saw the white envelope his mother had placed on the kitchen table, his heart jumped, and he could hardly wait until his family and two close friends were able to join him at his home a few hours later.

After what seemed like the longest three hours of Joel's life, major excitement erupted as everyone gathered together, talking, laughing, and speculating. But a spiritual calm suddenly filled the room as Joel opened the envelope and began to read aloud the words of the prophet: "Dear Elder Hiller, You are hereby called to serve as a missionary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

Joel describes what he experienced as he continued reading the letter: "I felt honored to be called, and the Spirit bore an immediate witness that this was the right thing and the right mission for me. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience." □



When the forms are completed, see your bishop or branch president for another interview.



If you are ready, your bishop or branch president will refer you to your stake or mission president for an interview.



When your priesthood leaders feel you are ready, your information is sent through your Area Presidency to the Missionary Department in Salt Lake City.



Getting Ready

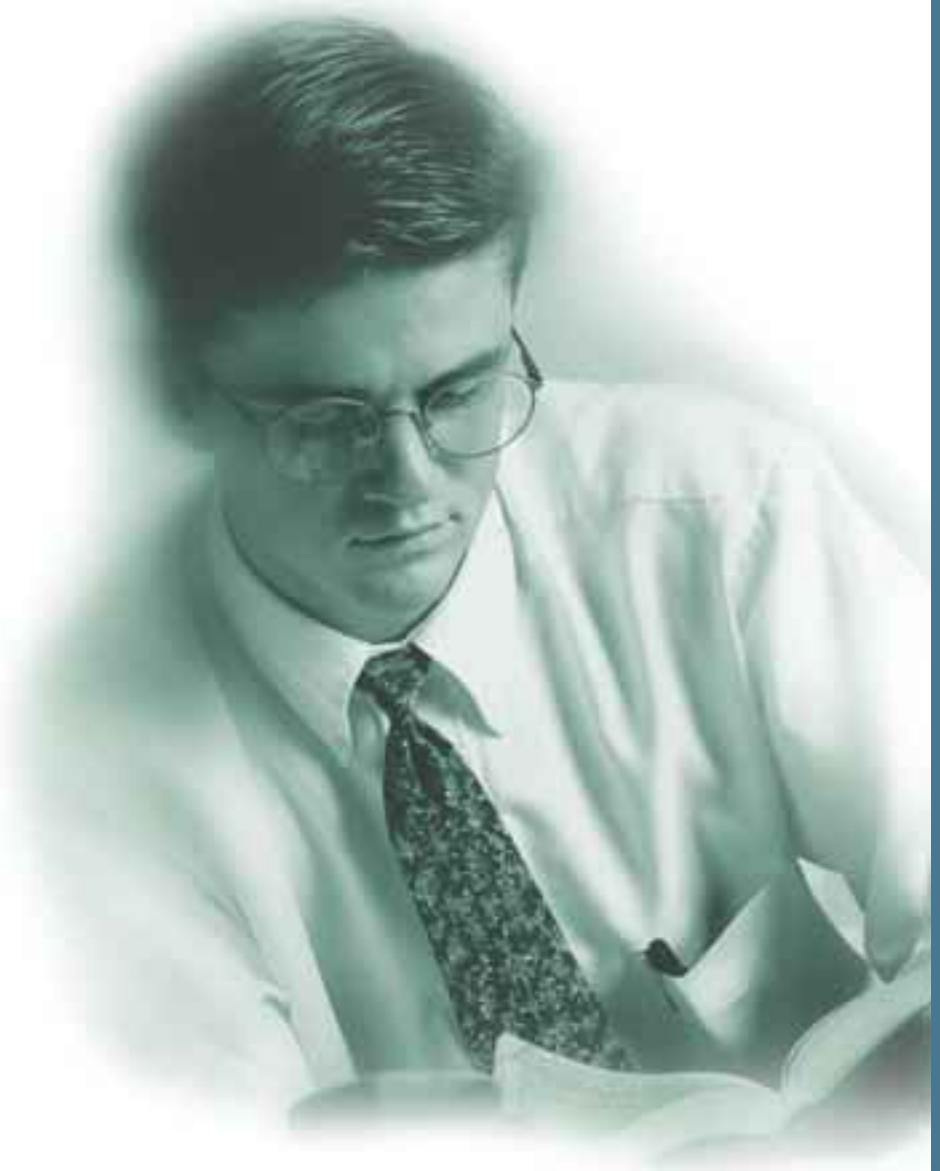
How can I prepare to become the best missionary I can be?

Here's advice from current missionaries and from other readers:

- Pray daily. Ask Heavenly Father to help you prepare.
- The Lord needs worthy missionaries. Live the commandments every day.
- Attend and pay attention in seminary and institute.
- Read the scriptures daily, especially the Book of Mormon. Apply Moroni's promise in Moroni 10:3–5.
- Learn responsibility by magnifying any calling or assignment you receive (see D&C 88:80). Home teaching, for example, is an excellent way to learn to build relationships of trust with others.
- Go to the temple as often as you can.
- Spend as much time as possible with your family—you will miss them while you are away. Participate in family prayer, home evenings, and other family activities.
- During family home evening, practice teaching your family, using the scriptures and the missionary discussions.

- Attend church each Sunday, and partake of the spirit there.
- Receive your patriarchal blessing. If you already have it, review it often.
- Practice getting to know people and being friendly.
- A mission is rigorous, so work to be in good physical shape.
- Start saving now. Set aside mission funds whenever you can.
- Work with full-time missionaries and ward or branch mission leaders.
- Team teach with the full-time

- missionaries and watch them teach the discussions.
- Practice teaching the discussions to friends.
- Attend baptismal services in your ward or branch.
- Share your testimony every chance you get.
- Invite nonmember friends to church and to activities.
- Attend a missionary preparation class.
- Memorize the Articles of Faith. □



SAFETY IN KEEPING DIVINE COVENANTS

As we make and keep sacred covenants, we are blessed with power to withstand adversity, resist temptation, and enjoy a fulness of gospel blessings. Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaches, “If we will keep our covenants, the covenants will keep us spiritually safe” (“Overcome . . . Even As I Also Overcame,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 71).

WHAT IS A COVENANT?

A covenant is a sacred two-way agreement between God and a person or a group of people. God sets the terms of His covenants. If we obey the terms of the covenant, we receive the blessings He promises those who keep the covenant. In a loving bond with us, He promises, “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say” (D&C 82:10).

All of Heavenly Father’s commandments are based in covenants. Covenants are made through saving ordinances such as baptism, the sacrament, and the exalting ordinances administered in the temple.

WHAT ARE THE BLESSINGS OF COVENANT KEEPING?

With every covenant we keep, specific blessings follow. For example, when we worthily take

the sacrament and renew our baptismal covenant, we are promised that we will always have the Lord’s Spirit with us (see D&C 20:77, 79). Those who obey the terms of “the new and everlasting covenant” of celestial marriage are promised that “they shall pass by the angels, and the gods . . . to their exaltation and glory in all things” (D&C 132:19).

As we bind ourselves to God by obeying sacred covenants, we are blessed with protective power against the adversary. Especially in times of trial, covenants can give us strength. Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explains: “The fruit of keeping covenants is the companionship of the Holy Ghost and an increase in the power to love. That happens because of the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ to change our very natures. . . . Greater spiritual power [comes] to those who accept covenants and keep commandments” (“Witnesses for God,” *Ensign*, November 1996, 32).

A PERSONAL CONNECTION

A sister who was unable to attend church because of some difficult health challenges came to know how sweetly personal God’s covenants are. Because of these unusual circumstances, Aaronic Priesthood holders, at the direction of the bishop, came to her home to administer the sacrament. She knew they would be coming, but she did not anticipate the outpouring of God’s love she would feel as they knelt and blessed the bread and water—just for her. “I’ll never forget when they held the sacrament tray with one piece of bread and then one small cup of water on it. As I took the sacred emblems, I felt such a personal connection with my Savior. I knew that His Atonement really was for me. I felt of His mercy and His love. In every way, I was renewed and strengthened to meet the challenges that were uniquely mine.”

Fully aware of our human frailties and personal challenges, Heavenly

Father gave us covenants to assure our safe passage through mortality. The more diligent we are in keeping our covenants, the more we find spiritual safety in our obedience to the Lord. □



Missionary Work and the Atonement

By Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



The Prophet Joseph Smith once declared that all things “which pertain to our religion are only appendages” to the Atonement of Jesus Christ.¹ In like manner and for the same reasons, every truth that a missionary or member teaches is only an appendage to the central message of all time—that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the world.

Our basic message is that with a complete offering of His body, His blood, and the anguish of His spirit, Christ atoned for the initial transgression of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and also for the personal sins of everyone else who would ever live in this world from Adam to the end of time.

Some of those blessings are unconditional, such as the gift of the Resurrection. Other of the blessings are very conditional, requiring the keeping of commandments, the performance of ordinances, and living the life of a disciple of Christ.

Either way, the essential message of the gospel is this from the Master’s own lips: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”² Thus the Atonement of Christ, which makes that return to the Father possible, is the central fact, the crucial foundation, and the chief doctrine of the great and eternal plan of salvation, which we are called to teach.

PREREQUISITES FOR BAPTISM

Probably there are very few missionaries, if any, who do not know the centrality of this doctrine. But I have been surprised to discover that this is not something that readily comes forward in a discussion of

missionary work.

For example, in zone conferences, I have asked missionaries what it is they want investigators to do as a result of their discussions with them.

“Be baptized!” is shouted forward in an absolute chorus.

“Yes,” I say, “but what has to precede that?”

Now they are a little leery. *Aha*, they think. *This is a test. It is a test on the first discussion.* “Read the Book of Mormon!” someone shouts. “Pray!” an elder roars. “Attend church!” one of the sisters declares. “Receive all of the discussions!” someone else offers.

“Well, you have pretty much covered the commitments in the first discussion,” I say, “but what else do you want your investigators to do?”

“Be baptized!” The chorus comes a second time.

“Elders and sisters,” I plead, “you have already told me about baptism, and I am still asking!”

Well, now they *are* stumped. *It must be commitments from the other discussions*, they think. “Live the Word of Wisdom!” someone says. “Pay tithing!” another shouts. And so it goes.



Every truth that a missionary or member teaches is only an appendage to the central message of all time—that Jesus is the Christ.

I have to say that almost never do the missionaries get around to identifying the two most fundamental things we want investigators to do prior to baptism: have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and repent of their sins. Yet “we believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; [then] third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.”³

A convert’s new life is to be built upon faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His redeeming sacrifice—a conviction that He really is the Son of God, that He lives this very moment, that He alone holds the key to our salvation and exaltation. That belief is to be followed by true repentance, repentance which shows our desire to be clean and renewed and whole, repentance that allows us to lay claim to the full blessings of the Atonement.

Then comes baptism for the remission of sins. Yes,

baptism is also for membership in the Church, but that isn’t what the Prophet Joseph Smith chose to stress in that article of faith. He stressed that it was baptism for the remission of sins—focusing you and me, the missionary and the investigator again on the Atonement, on salvation, on the gift Christ gives us.

MAKING THE ATONEMENT CENTRAL TO MISSIONARY WORK

Let me suggest some things all of us might do to keep Christ and His Atonement in the forefront of members’ and investigators’ consciousness.

Encourage in every way possible more spiritual Church meetings, especially sacrament meetings. Investigators deserve to feel essentially the same spirit in sacrament meeting that they feel when being taught by the missionaries.

Help orient investigators by explaining the ordinance of the sacrament that they will be witnessing.

The only way to salvation is through Gethsemane and on to Calvary.
The only way to eternity is through Him—the Way, the Truth, and the Life.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEVE BUNDERSON, EXCEPT AS NOTED; LEFT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN LUKE



A baptismal service ought to be focused on the significance of this ordinance and the Atonement of Christ, which makes it efficacious.

Missionaries could read to these investigators the sacramental prayers as found in the scriptures, they could share some of the words of favorite sacrament hymns, or they could do any number of other things that would help these new visitors have a powerful learning experience when they visit a sacrament meeting.

In like manner, do all that you can to make your baptismal services a spiritual, Christ-centered experience. A new convert deserves to have this be a sacred, carefully planned, and spiritually uplifting moment. The prayers, the hymns, surely the talks that are given—all ought to be focused on the significance of this ordinance and the Atonement of Christ, which makes it efficacious. Missionaries, don't get so consumed with the desire to record a baptism that you forget what this baptism represents and what it must mean in the life of this new member.

Throughout the teaching experience, missionaries must bear testimony of the Savior and His gift of salvation to us. Obviously you should bear testimony regularly of all the principles you are teaching, but it is especially important that you bear testimony of this central doctrine in the plan of our Heavenly Father.

There are several reasons for bearing testimony. One is that when you declare the truth, it will bring an echo, an unconscious memory to the investigator, that they have heard this truth before—and of course they have. A missionary's testimony invokes a great legacy of testimony dating back to the councils in heaven before this world was. There, in an earlier place, these same people heard this same plan outlined and heard there the role that Jesus Christ would play in their salvation.

The fact of the matter is investigators are not only hearing our testimony of Christ, but they are hearing echoes of other, earlier testimonies, including their own testimony of Him, for they were on the side of the faithful

who kept their first estate and earned the privilege of a second estate. We must always remember that these investigators were among the valiant who once overcame Satan by the power of their testimony of Christ!⁴

Furthermore, when you bear witness of "Jesus Christ, and him crucified,"⁵ to use

Paul's phrase, you invoke the power of God the Father and the Holy Ghost. The Savior Himself taught:

"Whoso believeth in me believeth in the Father also; and *unto him* [the investigator] *will the Father bear record of me, for he will visit him* [the investigator] *with fire and with the Holy Ghost.*

"And thus will the Father bear record of me, and the Holy Ghost will bear record unto him [the investigator] *of the Father and me; for the Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost are one. . . .*

*" . . . This is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them."*⁶

So why should we bear frequent and powerful testimony of Christ? Because doing so invites and becomes part of the divine power of testimony borne by God the Father and by the Holy Ghost, a testimony borne on wings of fire to the very hearts of investigators. Such a divine testimony of Christ is the rock upon which every new convert must build. Only this testimony of the atoning Anointed, Victorious One will prevail against the gates of hell.

Study the scriptures conscientiously and become familiar with those passages that teach and testify of Christ's redeeming mission. Nothing will so touch your heart and stir your soul like the truths of which I have been speaking.

I would particularly ask full-time and member missionaries to study from and teach the Atonement of Christ out of the Book of Mormon. I say that in a very



**The Book of
Mormon was the
first—and is still
the greatest—
missionary tract of
this dispensation.**

biased way, because it was on my own mission that I came to love the Book of Mormon and the majesty of the Son of God which is revealed there. In its unparalleled focus on the Savior of the world, the Book of Mormon is literally a new testament or “another testament” of Jesus Christ, declaring to all that through the Atonement of the Son of God, “as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will.”⁷

TESTIMONIES OF BOOK OF MORMON PROPHETS

Consider this from Nephi early in his ministry:

“And the world, because of their iniquity, shall judge him to be a thing of naught; wherefore they scourge him, and he suffereth it; and they smite him, and he suffereth it. Yea, they spit upon him, and he suffereth it, because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men.

“And the God of our fathers, . . . yea, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, yieldeth himself . . . as a man, into the hands of wicked men, to be lifted up, according to the words of Zenock, and to be crucified, according to the words of Neum, and to be buried in a sepulchre, according to the words of Zenos. . . .

“And all these things must surely come, saith the prophet Zenos. And the rocks of the earth must rend; and because of the groanings of the earth, many of the kings of the isles of the sea shall be wrought upon by the Spirit of God, to exclaim: The God of nature suffers.”⁸

Or this from Nephi’s remarkable brother Jacob, who gave a *two-day* sermon on the Fall and the Atonement!

“O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit. . . .

“And he cometh into the world that he may save all

men if they will hearken unto his voice; for behold, he suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children, who belong to the family of Adam.

“And he suffereth this that the resurrection might pass upon all men. . . .

“And he commandeth all men that they must repent, and be baptized in his name, having perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God.”⁹

Or, as a last example, this from the great patriarch Lehi:

“Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah. . . .

“Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.

“Wherefore, *how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth*, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise.

“Wherefore, he is the firstfruits unto God, inasmuch as he shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved.”¹⁰

Obviously, you recognize that these samples are testimonies from just the first pages of the Book of Mormon. Perhaps this is enough to give you a feel for the urgent, impressive theme that runs all through that sacred record. The Book of Mormon was the first—and is still the greatest—missionary tract of this dispensation.

I testify to you that we will change lives, including our own, if we will teach the Atonement through the Book

of Mormon as well as, of course, from all of the other scriptures.

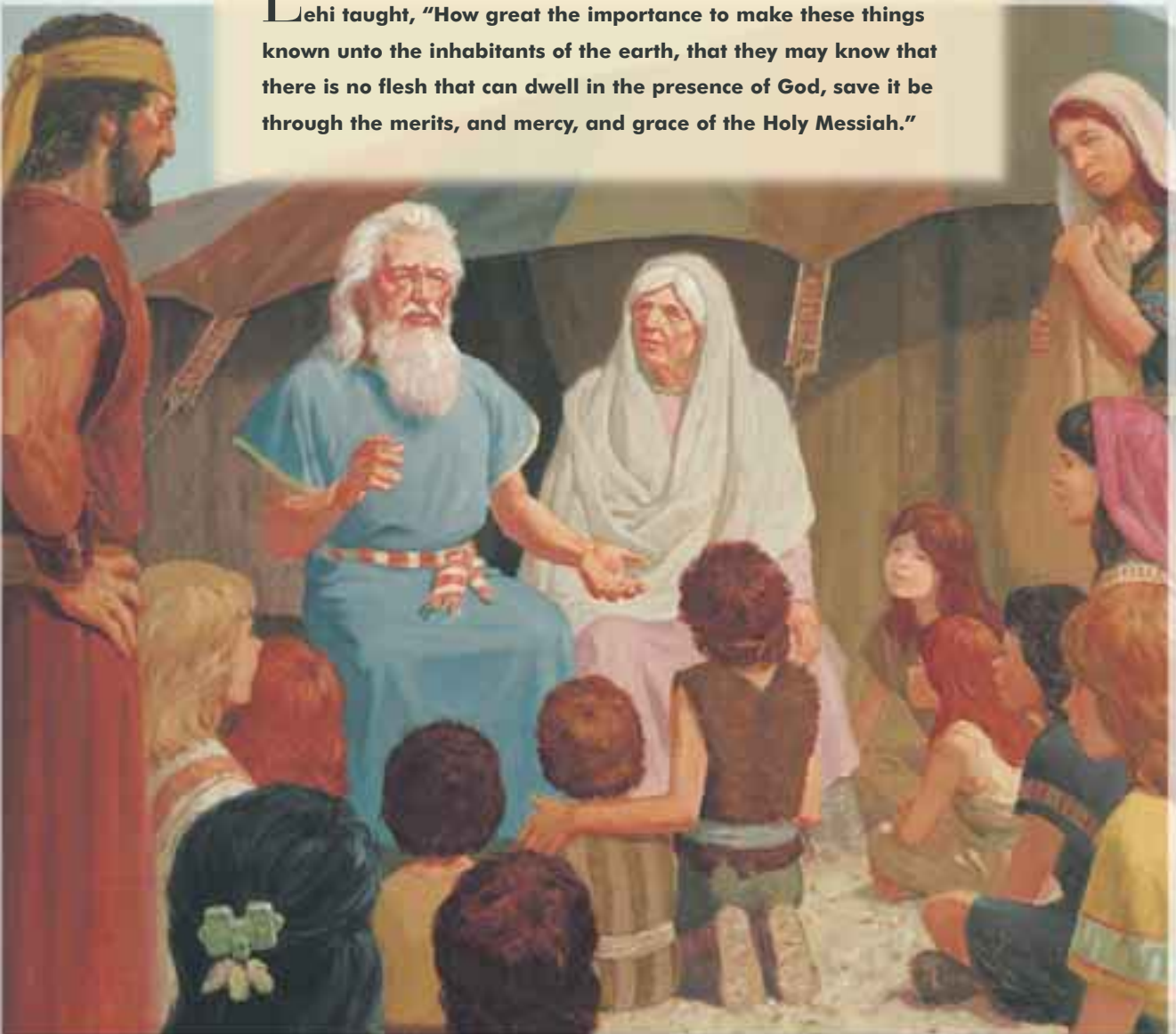
THE ATONEMENT AND THE MISSIONARY

Anyone who does any kind of missionary work will have occasion to ask, Why is this so hard? Why can't our success be more rapid? Why aren't there more people

joining the Church? Why isn't the only risk in missionary work that of pneumonia from being soaking wet all day and all night in the baptismal font?

I have thought about this a great deal. I offer this as my personal feeling. I am convinced that missionary work is not easy because *salvation is not a cheap experience*. Salvation *never* was easy. We are The Church of Jesus

Lehi taught, "How great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah."





I testify to you that we will change lives, including our own, if we will teach the Atonement through the Book of Mormon.

Christ, this is the truth, and He is our Great Eternal Head. How could we believe it would be easy for us when it was never, ever easy for Him? It seems to me that missionaries and mission leaders have to spend at least a few moments in Gethsemane. Missionaries and mission leaders have to take at least a step or two toward the summit of Calvary.

Now, please don't misunderstand. I'm not talking about anything anywhere near what Christ experienced. That would be presumptuous and sacrilegious. But I believe that missionaries *and* investigators, to come to the truth, to come to salvation, to know something of this price that has been paid, will have to pay a token of that same price.

For that reason I don't believe missionary work has ever been easy, nor that conversion is, nor that retention is, nor that continued faithfulness is. I believe it is supposed to require some effort, something from the depths of our soul.

If He could come forward in the night, kneel down, fall on His face, bleed from every pore, and cry, "Abba, Father (Papa), if this cup can pass, let it pass,"¹¹ then little wonder that salvation is not an easy thing for us. If you wonder if there isn't an easier way, you should remember you are not the first one to ask that. Someone a lot greater and a lot grander asked a long time ago if there wasn't an easier way.

When you struggle, when you are rejected, when you are spit upon and cast out, you are standing with the best life this world has ever known, the only pure and perfect life ever lived. You have reason to stand tall and be grateful that the Living Son of the Living God knows all about your sorrows and afflictions. The only way to salvation is through Gethsemane and on to Calvary. The only way to eternity is through Him—the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

I testify that the living God is our Eternal Father and that Jesus Christ is His living and Only Begotten Son in

the flesh. I testify that this Jesus, who was slain and hanged on a tree,¹² lives. The whole triumph of the gospel is that He lives, and because He does, so will we.

On that first Resurrection Sunday, Mary Magdalene first thought she saw a gardener. Well, she did—the Gardener who cultivated Eden and who endured Gethsemane. The Gardener who gave us the tree of life.

I declare Him to be the Savior of the world. I know that we are lifted up unto life because He was lifted up unto death. I bear witness that He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, that He was a man of sorrows acquainted with grief because upon Him were laid the transgressions of us all.¹³

I bear witness that He came from God as a God to bind up the brokenhearted, to dry the tears from every eye, to proclaim liberty to the captive and open the prison doors to them that are bound.¹⁴ I promise that because of your faithful response to the call to spread the gospel, He will bind up *your* broken hearts, dry *your* tears, and set *you* and your families free. That is my missionary promise to you and your missionary message to the world. □

From a talk given at the Provo (Utah) Missionary Training Center on 20 June 2000.

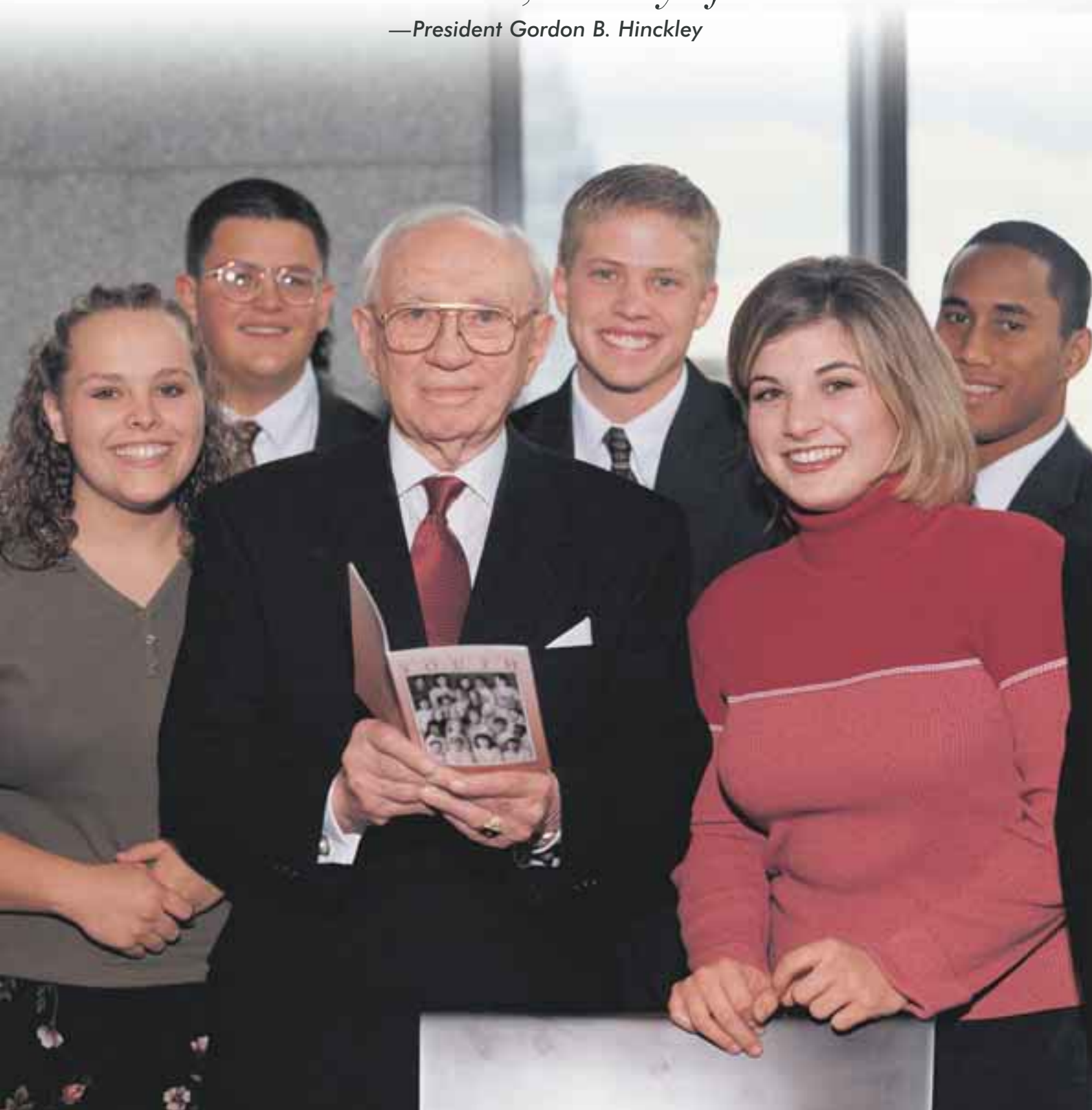
NOTES

1. See *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected by Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 121.
2. John 14:6.
3. Articles of Faith 1:4; emphasis added.
4. See Revelation 12:10–11.
5. 1 Corinthians 2:2.
6. 3 Nephi 11:35–36, 39; emphasis added.
7. Moses 5:9.
8. 1 Nephi 19:9–10, 12.
9. 2 Nephi 9:10, 21–23.
10. 2 Nephi 2:6–9; emphasis added.
11. See Mark 14:30.
12. See Acts 5:30.
13. See Isaiah 53; Mosiah 14.
14. See Isaiah 61:1–3.

BE YOUR BEST

*Be Grateful, Be Smart, Be Clean, Be True,
Be Humble, Be Prayerful*

—President Gordon B. Hinckley



The Most Important

By F. David Stanley

Former President of the Bountiful Utah Temple
and Former Member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy

No preparation for your mission—or your life—is more vital than what takes place in the temple.

It was Thursday, and like hundreds of others in the Church, Jim and Alex anxiously waited for the mail to arrive. Their missionary recommendation papers had been turned in several weeks before, and today might be the day their calls would arrive.

Jim was working at the local supermarket, and Alex was working for a home builder. Both had made their mothers promise that if a large white envelope from Church headquarters arrived, they would not open it. Both had trouble concentrating on their work that day. Jim nearly bagged bath soap with the fresh vegetables, and Alex cut a couple of boards too short.

The large white envelopes did arrive. And both young men rushed home from work at the end of the day. With their families around them, they opened the long-awaited calls to serve. The anticipation was replaced by joy and tears of gratitude. Both young men felt the Lord had spoken, and they were ready to respond to His call.

As the initial excitement died down, the next phase of preparation

began. Both families made detailed checklists: scheduling the last day of work, buying clothes and luggage, preparing for sacrament meeting, holding a family get-together, and—oh yes—going to the temple. Sadly, however, only one of the families revered the temple experience as the main event in the life of their son, giving it the emphasis it deserves.

THE TEMPLE IS CENTRAL

If going to the temple is to be the great blessing in your mission and life that it is intended to be, then it must be more than just another item on a checklist of things to do before you enter the mission field. President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) said, “Truly there is no work equal to that done in the temple” (“We Have a Work to Do,” *Ensign*, March 1995, 65). He also said, “Let us prepare every missionary to go to the temple worthily and to make that experience an even greater highlight than receiving the mission call” (“A Temple-Motivated People,” *Liahona*, May 1995, 6). And President Gordon B. Hinckley has stated, “[The temples], and the ordinances administered therein, represent the ultimate in our worship” (“Of Missions, Temples, and Stewardship,” *Ensign*, November 1995, 53). Only in the temple are the

crowning blessings of life given to the individual. Only in the temples can the fulness of the priesthood be realized. The essence of all we do in the Church centers on the temple.

ENDOWED WITH POWER

The endowment, which is a gift from God, entitles you to be armed “with power from on high” (D&C 38:32), which is the power of Jesus Christ. The plan of happiness you will teach in the mission field is presented in the temple in a most sacred and comprehensive manner. You will covenant not to speak outside of the temple regarding sacred ordinances and the covenants you will make. But as you are obedient to those covenants made in the temple, eternal blessings will accompany you into the mission field and be with you throughout your life.

PREPARING FOR THE TEMPLE

One very important preparation for the temple is to study and seek to understand those doctrines of the temple that are contained in the holy scriptures.

As you contemplate the depth of these doctrines, pray for the ability to understand the significance of the eternal covenants you will make in the temple. Pray for the ability to

Step



listen spiritually. It would be appropriate, if a temple is nearby, to participate in baptisms for the deceased prior to going for your own endowment.

Remember that as you go into that sacred “mountain of the Lord” (see Isaiah 2:3), your personal worthiness is of the greatest importance. Essentially, worthiness to enter the temple is worthiness to enter the mission field and vice versa. Please do not attempt to hide personal transgression or sin. If you do, you will not feel right as you take upon yourself those sacred covenants. As a missionary you will progress or flounder based upon your worthiness.

When you are interviewed for your first temple recommend, your bishop or branch president will talk to you and ask a number of questions. You may ask him to explain the intent and meaning of those worthiness inquiries even prior to your formal interview.

Wards and branches—and stakes and districts—have temple preparation classes for those who are going to the temple for the first time. You should definitely take advantage of the opportunity to attend.

THE TEMPLE EXPERIENCE

What should you expect when going to the temple for the first time? You will find an atmosphere of peace, tranquility, and reverence found nowhere else on the face of the earth.

Friendly, helpful temple workers will greet you and guide you every step of the way. In addition, you are permitted to have with you a personal escort. This may be a relative or close friend—where possible, a father for brethren or a mother for sisters.

You can add to the reverence found in the temple by being reverent yourself. Communication with others should be in a “temple voice.” You will know what that is when you enter the temple.

After your recommend has been verified and processed by temple workers, you will enter the dressing area and prepare for the washing and anointing ordinances (see D&C 124:39). Following these sacred initiatory ordinances, instruction will be given by a member of the temple presidency or by the temple matron or one of her assistants. You can expect an atmosphere of learning (see D&C 109:8).

You will then be directed to an ordinance room where sacred instructions are given and covenants made. The eternal covenants you make will change your life forever. The deep significance of what these covenants consist of will not be a surprise to you if you have been studying the scriptures. The covenants are a continuation of what is expected of every member who has been baptized and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. However,



receiving these covenants in the holy temple places upon you a greater obligation, with the greatest blessings of eternity promised in return for your faithfulness.

A commitment to wear the garment of the holy priesthood the rest of your life is a part of the process. The garment assists you in remembering the significance of the sacred covenants you make and will be a protection to you against evil.

After completing the endowment process you will enter the celestial room of the temple and enjoy its reverent sacredness. There you will meet with loved ones who accompanied you through the temple. This is a time and place for sacred conversations, quiet contemplation, pondering, and worship.

A FEELING OF STRENGTH

You gain strength by going to the temple for your own endowment. You will feel it immediately if you prepare yourself for this great blessing. That strength can be maintained and increased prior to your mission and throughout your life by attending the temple regularly. A deeper meaning of Heavenly Father's plan of happiness will begin to unfold as you take upon yourself significant covenants. It is as Alma describes: "Your understanding doth begin to be enlightened, and your mind doth begin to expand" (Alma 32:34). Alma also says, "It beginneth to be delicious to me" (Alma 32:28).

As you begin to study, learn, and teach the missionary discussions, you will immediately feel the harmony of sacred covenants made in the temple. This will further increase your faith and testimony. The power you can feel by regular temple attendance is manifest in a stronger testimony of the Savior and of His atoning sacrifice. All covenants you will make in the temple center on our Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Obedience to those covenants will bring multiple blessings to you, not only during your mission but throughout your entire life. Enter the temple with the humble desire to grow in understanding our Heavenly Father's will for you. This humility will allow you to feel the Holy Spirit, which enlarges your desire and commitment to live a righteous life. Answers to life's challenges are available to each of us in the holy temples of the Lord.

The greatest blessings of life and eternity and a fulness of the priesthood can be found only in the Lord's temples. When you make the temple experience more than just another checklist item, a power will flow into your life that cannot come in any other way. You will be a more effective instrument in the Lord's hands as you do His work. And as you labor to bring others to Christ, you will find yourself on a course that will eventually lead you back into the presence of the Father and the Son. □

These scriptures can help you as you prepare to go to the temple for the first time—and all subsequent times.

Power of godliness
D&C 84:20

Power from on high
D&C 95:8–9

A place of instruction
D&C 97:10–17

Sacrifice
D&C 109:5

A place of holiness
D&C 109:13

Receiving every needful thing
D&C 109:15

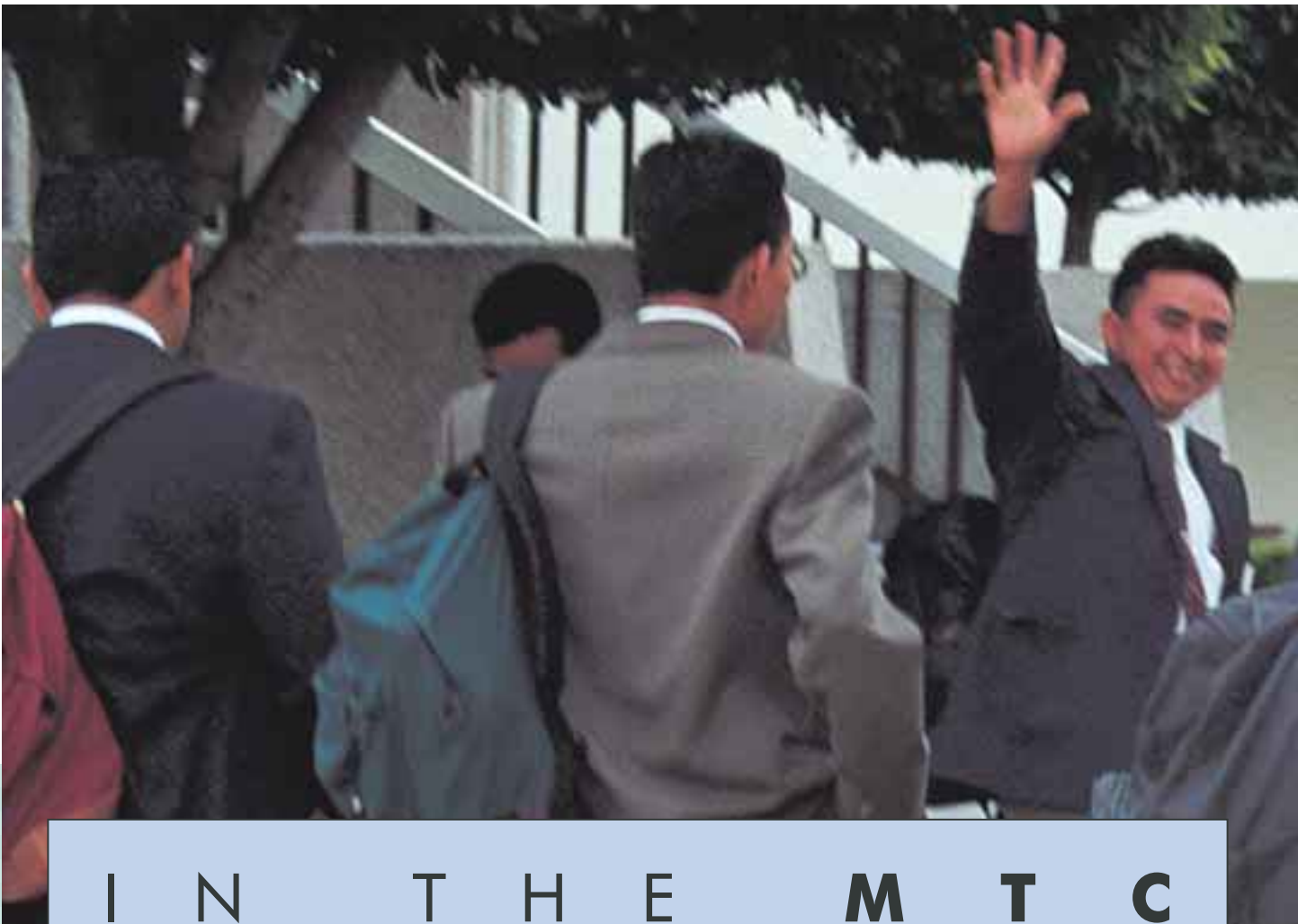
God's house
D&C 109:16

Cleanliness
D&C 109:20

The Savior's appearance in the Kirtland Temple
D&C 110

Washings and anointings
D&C 124:37–42

Covenants
D&C 132:7–14



I N T H E M T C

By **Marvin K. Gardner**

Whether you have been a member of the Church all your life or for only a year, the Missionary Training Center (MTC) can help you prepare to serve your mission.

He was born in a small adobe house with a thatched roof in Chojoló, a remote mountain village in southern México. When he listened to the missionaries at age 15, someone had to translate their Spanish words into his native language, Tzotzil. He studied Selections from the Book of Mormon in Tzotzil, was baptized, and tried to share the gospel with his parents. Four years later, they were baptized.



Manuel Solís Ruiz served as a

Primary teacher and branch clerk. When a missionary encouraged him to serve a full-time mission, Manuel explained why he couldn't go. "I don't speak or understand Spanish—only Tzotzil," he said. "And we don't have any money. I had to quit school as a boy to work in the fields to support my elderly parents. They depend solely on me."

But Manuel wanted to serve a mission, and he found the courage to speak to the local mission president.



ABOVE: PHOTOGRAPH AT THE MÉXICO MTC BY MARVIN K. GARDNER. LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH OF ELDER MANUEL SOLÍS COURTESY OF THE MISSIONARY DEPARTMENT

Recognizing the purity of Manuel's heart, the mission president and other local leaders helped make it possible for him to serve.

"Now I am at the Missionary Training Center in México City!" says 21-year-old Manuel, who was called to the México México City South Mission. "I was sad to leave my father and mother, but they will be all right. The Lord gives me confidence and strength. I am learning the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I have found many friends here

in the MTC who are helping me."

Elder Solís is having a life-changing experience at the Missionary Training Center—one that is helping him prepare for his mission and also for life. Missionaries in MTCs around the world are having similar experiences.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE MTC?

All MTCs have the same statement of purpose:

Under the influence of the Holy Spirit and in an atmosphere of love,

trust, confidence, and respect, MTC training helps missionaries draw nearer to God and develop greater converting power. At MTCs each missionary will:

- *Learn and cherish the doctrines of the gospel and develop Christlike attributes.*
- *Learn to teach with power by the Spirit to help others have faith in Christ, repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, and endure to the end.*
- *Seek the gift of tongues and become functional in the mission language.*



In addition to plenty of spiritual nourishment, the MTC also provides balanced meals. *Far left: At the Provo MTC. Left: At the México MTC.*

HOW MANY MISSIONARY TRAINING CENTERS ARE THERE?

There are 15 Missionary Training Centers throughout the world—in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, England, Guatemala, Japan, Korea, México, New Zealand, Perú, Philippines, Spain, and Provo, Utah.

WHICH MTC WILL I ATTEND?

When you receive your call, you will be notified which MTC to go to. In most cases, you will receive training from native teachers, interact with native missionaries, team teach with missionaries serving in the area, and have firsthand experiences with the local people and culture. Many of you will not need to learn a language, and you will attend the MTC for about three weeks. If you do need language training, you will attend for about eight weeks.

No matter which MTC you attend, you will feel the Spirit as you interact with missionaries from many locations. For example, Sister Ana

Victoria Ordoñez Requena is from Guatemala, is attending the MTC in Argentina, has a companion from Chile, and is preparing to serve in Uruguay. “I could feel the Spirit from the moment of my arrival,” she says. “My testimony is growing steadily.”

WHAT WILL I DO AT THE MTC?

You will have a full-time missionary companion, an MTC president, and returned-missionary teachers. You will study the doctrine of the Church. You will learn how to teach by the Spirit—and especially how to use the Book of Mormon and other scriptures in teaching. You will learn how to present the proselyting discussions. If necessary, you will receive language training. You will attend the temple. General Authorities and Area Authorities will speak to you in devotionals—live or via satellite or video. You will learn the demeanor, rules, and routine of a full-time missionary. You will have time to get physical exercise, sing in choirs, eat, do your laundry, and write letters.

In the process, you will learn to be an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ. You will be able to begin your work in the mission field with confidence and humility, with faith and assurance, and with a solid foundation of gospel knowledge, teaching skills, language ability, and cultural awareness.

WHAT ARE OTHER MISSIONARIES

SAYING ABOUT THE MTC?

Still Can’t Believe It. Elder Edgar Eleuterio Quispe Pérez of Bolivia, attending the Perú MTC: “I still can’t believe it—I am really here in the MTC, and I’m wearing a missionary name tag!”

At Home. Elder William Samuel Lolani Meredith of Western Samoa, attending the New Zealand MTC: “At first I was nervous, but now I feel at home here.”

Among Those Called to Serve. Elder Choi Byung-Yong of Korea, attending the Korea MTC: “I was thrilled to see the video *Called to Serve*. It helped me realize I am one of 60,000 missionaries serving the Lord!”



Hours of intensive study are punctuated by opportunities for physical activity. *Below: At the Dominican Republic MTC. Right: At the México MTC.*



WILL I LIKE MY COMPANION?

A Friend. Elder Joseph Thomas Miller of Utah, USA, attending the Spain MTC: “I had never studied Spanish, but my companion had studied it for six years. He has helped me so much with the language, the gospel, and many things. He has been more than a companion; he has been a friend.” His companion, Elder Samuel David Norton of England, says it goes both ways: “Elder Miller is amazing. The lessons of humility and diligence that I have learned from him have really helped me.”

Patient with Me. Elder Esteban José Ventura of Uruguay, attending the Argentina MTC: “My companion has helped me know how to show love for others. He is patient with me and has helped me learn the discussions.”

Think about Others First. Sister Yulia Vladimirovna Mikhaleva of Russia, attending the Provo MTC:

“It’s not easy to be with one person 24 hours a day. We are learning to think about others first and then about ourselves.”

The Language of the Spirit. Sister Kimberly Monika Johnson of Germany, attending the England MTC: “I’m grateful for my companion, Sister Iva Petkova, from Bulgaria. In our group of 12 sisters, eight nationalities are represented. I have grown to love each sister. Though we had language barriers, we have been able to communicate through the universal language of the Spirit. I’ve been filled with the Spirit each time I’ve heard them pray in their native languages and as they’ve said simple prayers in English.”

Unified in Our Cause. Sister Jana Hedrlinova of the Czech Republic, attending the Provo MTC: “There are a lot of people here from different countries and different cultures, and

the Spirit is strong among us. We are unified in our cause.”

WILL I BE ABLE TO MAKE IT?

Difficult at First. Elder José Luis Aguilar of Perú, attending the Perú MTC: “The two things I like best about the MTC are the food and the beautiful spirit I feel here. The most difficult part is that it’s very strict. We always have to be on time, there’s a lot of studying to do, and there’s not a lot of time to rest. At first it was difficult to get used to it—but now it’s OK.”

Hard to Get Up Early. Elder Oscar Ignacio Pérez Aguilera of Chile, attending the Perú MTC: “It has been hard for me to get up early and go to bed early, but I know the rules are to help us be responsible and successful.”

Overcoming Homesickness. Elder Cristhian Rolando Escalante Romero of Ecuador, attending the Guatemala MTC: “Since I am so far from home, letters take a long time to get here. But my companion strengthens me by being by my side. My MTC



While in the MTC, missionaries have the opportunity to attend the temple. Left: At the Madrid Spain Temple.

president gives me advice as if I were one of his grandchildren; I love him so much. And Jesus Christ nourishes me.”

On My Side. Elder Cory Lignell of Utah, USA, attending the Dominican Republic MTC: “I know God is on my side and my friends and family are praying for me.”

The Love of Christ. Elder José Carlos Pérez Zubieta of Bolivia, attending the Perú MTC: “I want to learn all the habits and rules that will help me become a successful missionary. In the MTC, I feel the love of Christ. I feel very close to Him.”

CAN I REALLY LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE AND CULTURE?

Like No Other Language Center in the World. Elder Wojtek Krzysztof Baszczyk of Poland, attending the Provo MTC: “There is no other language center in the world where people learn languages as well in such a short time. I think it’s because we are taught under the influence of the Holy Ghost. Before coming here, I studied English for five years in

school, but a Brazilian elder who sits next to me had never studied English. He is talking as well as I am after being in the MTC only one month!”

Immerse Yourself in the Culture. Elder Daniel Bokovoy of California, USA, attending the Brazil MTC: “One of the most important factors in learning a new language is immersing yourself in the culture where the language is spoken. Here we have many opportunities to go into the city and interact with the citizens. We are also able to go out proselyting with local full-time missionaries. We have real experiences in missionary work.”

WHAT ARE THE CLASSES AND MEETINGS LIKE?

Teachers Instill Confidence. Sister Lizbeth Adriana Martínez Hernández of México, attending the México MTC: “My teachers have given me confidence that if I work hard, I will be able to accomplish what the Lord expects of me.”

Understanding the Atonement. Sister Bayelita Carmen Ituza Casa of Perú, attending the Perú MTC: “In our class, we had an assignment to sketch an outline explaining the Atonement. But I had never clearly understood the Atonement, so I couldn’t do it—and I wasn’t the only one. When our outlines were due, our teachers helped us. I could tell we were more important than the assignment. We studied D&C 19:16–19, and I was able to understand the great love Jesus Christ has for us.”

To Be with Our MTC President. Elder Tomomi Hara of Japan, attending the Japan MTC: “One of the greatest blessings is to be with our wonderful MTC president and his wife. Whenever I am with them, I feel the Spirit.”

Listening to General Authority Speakers. Elder Ricardo Andrés Ibáñez Fuentemavida of Chile, attending the Perú MTC: “When we watched the video *Special Witnesses of Christ*, I was especially moved by the testimony President Gordon B. Hinckley bore in the Sacred Grove.



MTCs currently in operation worldwide.

I felt great joy, and I could see love and peace in his eyes.”

Sister Abigail Ray Babaga of Papua New Guinea, attending the New Zealand MTC: “I heard the broadcast of a talk by Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and I was filled with the Spirit.”

Elder Benjamin F. Gardner of Arizona, USA, attending the Brazil MTC: “We watched a video of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles speaking at the Provo MTC. It was very powerful. He says he thinks of his mission nearly every day of his life.”

WHAT IF I HAVEN’T ATTENDED THE TEMPLE YET?

Preparing for the Temple. Sister Carmen María Ramos Zúñiga of Honduras, attending the Guatemala MTC: “On our first Sunday here, we fasted to prepare ourselves to enter the temple. From the moment I awoke that morning, I felt the presence of the Spirit. I’ve had a strong impression that my nonmember

family will soon be contacted by missionaries and will accept the gospel.”

In the Temple. Sister Sachiko Miyagawa of Japan, attending the Japan MTC: “Attending the temple while at the MTC is an experience I will never forget. In the temple I felt a desire to be more obedient and come closer to God.”

To Help Others Feel Joy. Sister Lesly María Guzmán Maldonado of Guatemala, attending the Guatemala MTC: “While participating in the ordinances of the temple, I felt hope, assurance, love, and thankfulness. I realized how much it would mean to me to reach exaltation with my family. I will work with all my strength to help other people feel this same joy.”

IS THE MTC REALLY “LIFE CHANGING”?

Only Beginning. Elder Nathan Craven of Utah, USA, attending the Spain MTC: “Being in the Church for only a year and a half after 10 years of inactivity, I knew nothing of the gospel. So compared to where I

was two months ago, I am a giant. But I realize I am only beginning.”

Bearing Testimony. Elder Brett Maxfield of Idaho, USA, attending the Dominican Republic MTC: “One night after a devotional, my district went into a room and shared what we had learned and then bore our testimonies. I had never felt the Spirit that strong before in my life.”

Growing Spiritually. Elder Nigel Morriss of England, attending the England MTC: “My spiritual growth here has been immeasurable. In an atmosphere of love, trust, confidence, and respect, I have drawn nearer to God in a way hard to imagine. I have come to understand that this experience is just the beginning of a journey. My mission is only the springboard for greater growth and development.”

Feeling the Atonement. Elder Evanilda Gomes do Nascimento of Brazil, attending the Brazil MTC: “The spiritual growth here is unbelievable! I used to accept the Atonement. Now I feel it in my heart in a way I cannot express.” □

Living the Adventure

Elder David B. Haight of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has written: “To embark on a mission, as so many know, involves many of the same emotions as embarking on some high adventure: excitement, some anxiety, perhaps a touch of fear. In missionary work, we take a step into the

unknown” (see this issue, page 15). Like any great adventure, a mission requires preparation, practice, and performance. It requires one’s best effort. But few other adventures, as the following experiences illustrate, can produce joy so tangible and life changing as that which comes from missionary service.



A Treasure of Love

By Romy Bazalar Coterá

I still remember one particular afternoon as if it were yesterday. I sat down next to a smiling lady during our Sunday meetings, which at that time were held both in the morning and the afternoon. I took her hand to make sure she would stay with me. But I was only six years old, and I was quite tired. My eyelids began to close, and though I struggled hard to keep hold of that warm hand, I fell asleep. When I woke up, the hand was no longer there. Tears ran down my small face, and my heart was sad.

Her name was Sister Avon Compton. She and her husband, Merlin, were always smiling, and their faces reflected love. When I

close my eyes today, I can still see them clearly. I often tell my Primary class about them. Their story is the best way I know to teach my CTR class about love.

They had come to Perú from their own country to be with us for a while. She did not speak our language very well, but her husband spoke it better than some of us. We admired him and knew he loved our language and culture.

I do not remember exactly when I began to love Sister Compton, but I think it must have been that first Sunday in Primary. She taught us the song “When I Go to Church” (*Children’s Songbook*, 157). She had

brought pictures, and as she taught us the words of the song, she taught us about singing. She told us that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ liked to hear our voices raised in praise.

On another occasion, we again sat together during sacrament meeting. We could not say much to each other because of the language difference, but we could communicate. During the meeting, she got out a piece of paper and some crayons. I thought she was going to write something, but she whispered, “Let’s draw Mama.” She drew a small circle. Then she pointed to her eyes and gave me the piece of paper and a crayon. I understood that

Sister Compton got out a piece of paper and some crayons and whispered, “Let’s draw Mama.”



she wanted me to draw the eyes, and I did. I gave the crayon back to her, and she drew hair. Then I drew the dress, and she drew the arms. Eventually, the two of us had drawn a picture of my mother. I felt so happy! I showed it to Mama, and I gave Sister Compton a big hug.

She always had something to share with us. Often it was a children's story she had written herself. One day she talked to me about Jesus Christ. Then we colored some pictures she had drawn of Jesus.

The day came when Brother and Sister Compton had to leave. I asked why. Mama told me they had a family who missed and needed them. I thought of Mama and how I could not be away from her for very long. That's when I knew I had to let Sister Compton go.

Many years have passed since then. The letters between us have never stopped, and our friendship has become stronger. When I think of Sister Compton, I think of the words our Lord Jesus Christ left with His disciples: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

I fondly remember summer days when we Primary children made a game of hunting for treasure—a piece of candy, a flower, or a little toy hidden by an older child. How happy we were when we found the treasure! Since then I have found many beautiful and valuable treasures in my life.

But one of my greatest treasures will always be the love of two special member missionaries—my friends Avon and Merlin Compton.

Romy Bazalar Cotera is a member of the Santa Cruz Ward, Lima Perú Limatambo Stake.

Caught by Surprise

By Wang Shu-chuan

I joined the Church in Tainan, Taiwan, in October 1991. Two years later I moved to Taipei to work. Feeling a need to gain more knowledge of the gospel, I enrolled in institute. This decision led to an event that caught me by surprise.

During my second year in institute, we studied the Doctrine and Covenants, and I learned a lot about the temple. I gained a great desire to go to the temple. When I talked to my bishop about going, he suggested ways for me to prepare. In June 1995, I went for an interview with the stake president.

My stake president initially said I was too young to take on the sacred covenants of the temple. His words devastated me, for I had worked hard to prepare and I knew in my heart I was ready. So I pleaded with him to reconsider, explaining that my bishop had sent me to him. I asked if we could at least talk about the possibility. He said, "If you insist, we will talk."

Near the end of the interview, he asked, "If the Lord asks you to

go on a mission today, will you go?"

I replied, "I think so."

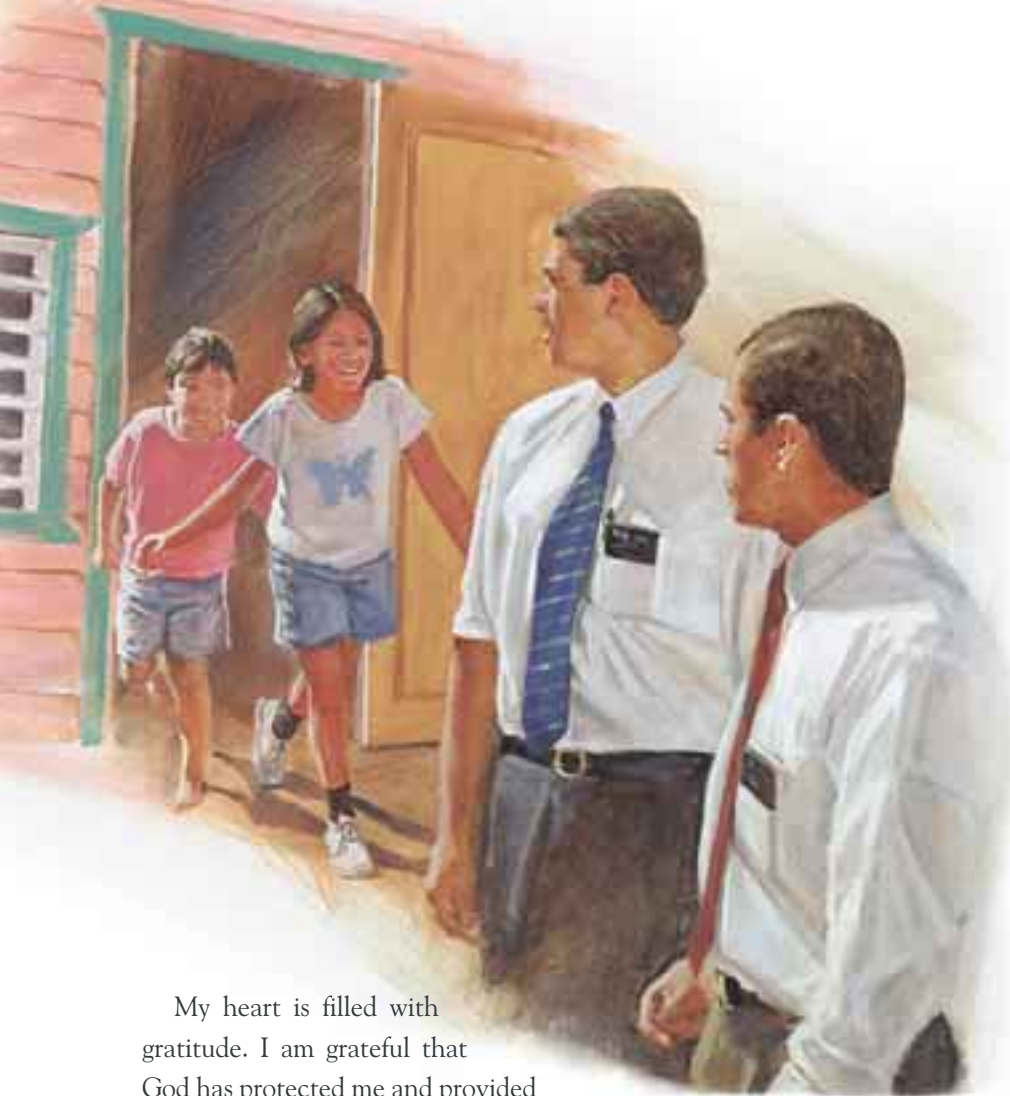
I received my temple recommend and my endowment that same day. I also decided that I would accept the call to serve a mission.

My decision stunned my family. My older brother declared that if I went on a mission, I should not plan on having anything to do with my family in the future.

But as Nephi promised, the Lord prepared a way for me to do what He asked (see 1 Nephi 3:7). I left for the Taiwan Taichung Mission in May 1996. Right before I left, my brother held me in his arms and tearfully told me that he opposed my going because he hated to lose me. Throughout my mission, my family gave me their full support.

Serving a mission changed my life. I came to understand more clearly my relationship with Heavenly Father. My testimony grew, and the significance of the work, of bringing souls to Jesus Christ, became eternally impressed on my mind and heart.

What is most dear to me now that I have completed my mission is the promise I made to God that I would endure to the end. I remember my mission president's words as a group of us were soon to be released. He said he wanted us to stay worthy so we could all be together again in heaven someday. I have thought of this challenge often, especially during times of trial.



My heart is filled with gratitude. I am grateful that God has protected me and provided me with learning experiences. Many of these experiences were surprising and unexpected, but they all have stretched me into becoming more like the servant of the Lord I so much want to be.

Wang Shu-chuan is a member of the Taipei Fourth Ward, Taipei Taiwan Central Stake.

“Give Us a Blessing!”

By Lesly Augusto Tobar Correa

Otavalo, a beautiful city in north-eastern Ecuador, is even more beautiful in my memory because of an experience I had there while serving in the Ecuador Quito Mission. One afternoon in September 1996 my companion and I were walking to a teaching appointment. Suddenly, some children ran out of a small,

humble house, crying, “A blessing! A blessing! Give us a blessing!”

We were astonished and didn’t know what to think. We considered ignoring them and continuing on, but something prompted us to find out what was happening. We feared something terrible had taken place.

The children quickly ran back inside the house. We followed them and found a lady who was as surprised to see us as we were surprised to see her. We explained what had happened, and smiling, she told us, “The children were just playing.” We talked for a few minutes, took her name as a referral, then left.

Two days later we returned and discovered she was a member of the Church. She hadn’t gone to church

My companion and I were astonished when some children ran out of a small, humble house, crying, “A blessing! A blessing! Give us a blessing!”

for a long time, she said, mostly because she hadn’t felt anyone had encouraged her. Her children were not members of the Church. We sensed that she wanted the gospel of Jesus Christ to be part of her and her children’s lives.

We shared the message of the gospel with her children, and they were baptized two weeks later. At the baptismal service, one of the children began to cry with joy. He said his mother had changed, and he was very happy the Lord had sent the missionaries to their house.

Little did those children know that when they so playfully asked for a blessing, the Lord would answer them—in abundance. Today, the family continues to be strong and faithful in the Church.

Many people in the world are like those children. Without knowing it, they desire a blessing from our Father in Heaven. They simply need to ask, and He will answer. For as He said, “Ye are little children, and ye have not as yet understood how great blessings the Father hath in his own hands and prepared for you” (D&C 78:17). □

Lesly Augusto Tobar Correa is a member of El Porvenir Ward, Milagro Ecuador Stake.

Using the October 2001 *Liahona*

LESSON IDEAS

■ “Hallmarks of a Happy Home,” page 2: One of the hallmarks of a happy home mentioned by President Thomas S. Monson is “a library of learning.” Think about the books in your home. How do they foster learning and faith?

■ “Your Mission—A Spiritual Adventure,” page 12: Elder David B. Haight explains that many missionaries sacrifice something they love to serve a mission. How do the blessings outweigh the sacrifice?

■ “Missionary Work and the Atonement,” page 26: Elder Jeffrey R. Holland sometimes asks missionaries what they want investigators to do as a result of the discussions. The missionaries, he says, almost never identify “the two most fundamental things we want investigators to do prior to baptism.” What are those two things, and why are they so important—not only for investigators but also for missionaries and members?

■ “No Bulls in the Ditch,” page F14: Why is it important to follow the instructions given to us by parents, teachers, and the Lord?

TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE	
· Atonement	26
· Blessings.....	F12
· Book of Mormon	26
· Conversion.....	26, 44
· Covenants	25, 34
· Education	2
· Eternal perspective	F2
· Faith.....	12, 26
· Family history.....	F10
· Family home evening	48
· Family relations	2
· Friendship.....	17
· Home teaching.....	9
· Jesus Christ	26, F4, F6
· Love	2, 44
· Missionary Training Centers.....	38
· Missionary work	10, 12, 17, 20, 24, 26, 34, 38, 44, F2, F8
· New Testament Stories.....	F4, F6
· Obedience	F12, F14
· Patriarchal blessings	F2
· Prayer.....	2, F14
· Preparation	17, 20, 24, 34, 38, F8
· Primary	F12
· Prophets.....	10, 33, F12
· Sacrament	25
· Sacrifice	12
· Scripture study	2
· Standards	33
· Teaching.....	48
· Temples and temple work....	34, 44, F10
· Testimony	2
· Visiting teaching.....	25

PHOTOGRAPH BY JERRY GARNIS



A POSITIVE INFLUENCE

Who has had an impact for good in your life? The *Liahona* would like to hear about a person who has influenced you and how he or she was such a positive influence. Please send ideas, stories, and experiences to A Positive Influence, *Liahona*, Floor 24, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223, USA; or e-mail to CUR-Liahona-IMag@ldschurch.org. Please include your complete name, address, telephone number, and ward and stake (or branch and district).

The Friend

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





FRIEND TO FRIEND

**ELDER WAYNE M. HANCOCK
OF THE SEVENTY**

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

From an interview by Kellene Ricks Adams

BACKGROUND PHOTOGRAPH BY JED A. CLARK

I love my patriarchal blessing. I carry it with me wherever I go, and I read it often for guidance and direction in my life. You can look forward to getting the needed recommend from your bishop or branch president and then receiving your own blessing.

Our patriarchal blessings come from a loving Heavenly Father through an ordained patriarch and contain special and specific counsel for each of us. We don't always understand our blessings when we get them, though. Sometimes it takes years before we see the fulfillment of some parts of the blessings. But if we read them, pray about them, and strive to follow the counsel and advice Heavenly Father gives us in these sacred blessings, we will receive extra help and guidance.

One sentence in my patriarchal blessing thrilled me: "You will be called to preach the gospel in the world." I had a lifelong desire to serve a mission, and so when I heard that sentence, I felt that I would have that opportunity.

When it was time for me to serve a mission, the United States was involved in a war and only a few young men were actually allowed to serve missions. The rest were expected to serve their country in the war if they were drafted.

At that time, all prospective missionaries were interviewed by General Authorities as well as by their local Church leaders. I went through the interview process, and because of that sentence in my patriarchal blessing, I thought I would be called on a mission. I was terribly disappointed when I was notified that I was required to serve my country instead.

I often thought about that sentence in my patriarchal blessing. *When and how will I be called to preach the gospel?*



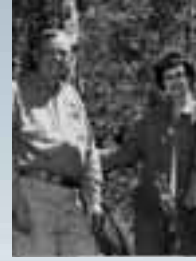
At age 6, with his sister Evelyn Anne.



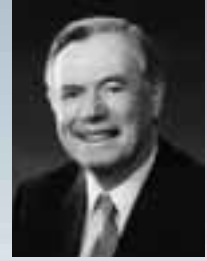
About age 10, wearing his favorite childhood haircut.



As an 18-year-old university student (left) with his cousin



Connie, at a family reunion.



Elder Hancock today.

Bevan B. Blake.

I asked myself. Today, of course, as a General Authority, I am preaching the gospel all over the world. I can see now how that promise is being fulfilled. But when I was younger, I often wondered.

At times in our lives, we may wonder how the Lord will keep His promises. Sometimes it is hard to see things from His eternal viewpoint, and we start to question why He does certain things and why certain things are happening to us. We must remember that Heavenly Father is perfect and that He loves us very much. We should always trust in Him, and He will lead and guide us into happiness.

One of the ways Heavenly Father helps us find happiness is through righteous parents and Church leaders. They see things differently than we do, and we must listen to them and obey them.

Once a group of young men went to a lake. They took a bow and 10 arrows with them. After all the arrows had been shot and had fallen harmlessly into the lake, one boy decided to swim to the middle of the lake to retrieve the last arrow. He dived in and headed toward it. He got it and then turned back to swim for shore. By this time he was extremely tired. His wet clothing weighed him down. Holding the arrow in his hand made swimming very difficult. He began to fear he might drown, and he called out desperately to his friends for help.

“Put your feet down and walk to shore,” they called back to him. He couldn’t see things clearly, but his

friends, who were looking at things from the shore, knew he was in shallow water. All he had to do was stand up and he would be safe.

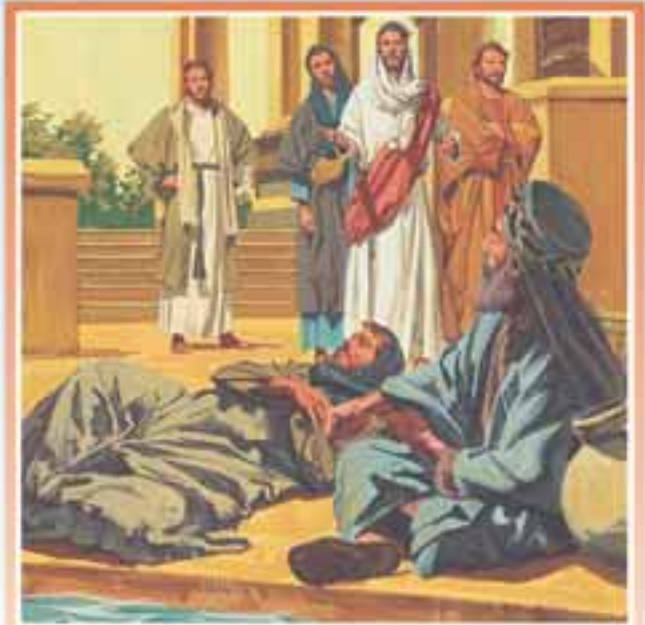
Our parents and Church leaders often can see things we can’t. If we listen to them, their guidance will help us reach the shore safely. Being obedient is crucial to our safety and protection.

Living honestly is also important in our lives. Once, when I was in charge of a huge project in Italy, the people I worked with encouraged me to do something dishonest. “Everyone does it,” my coworkers said. “It’s just the way things are done.” Maybe what they were saying was true. But I refused to do something I knew was wrong. We decided together to do the honest, right thing, and our project was successful.

You will have many chances in life to cheat, lie, or do something else you know you shouldn’t. Sometimes others will encourage you to make wrong choices. It may seem like everyone is doing the wrong thing and you are the only one choosing the right. You may be tempted to go along with everybody else.

Remember that you will always, always be blessed for choosing the right. Heavenly Father knows the decisions you make, and He will strengthen you and support you during difficult times. He loves you very much. Your parents and your Primary teachers and leaders love you too. Have faith in them and be obedient, and you will receive great blessings. □

DOING HIS FATHER'S WORK ON EARTH



ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL MANN

On a Jewish feast day, the Savior went to the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. People believed the waters of the pool could cure them of disease or other physical problems.

John 5:1-4



Near the pool, Jesus saw a man who had been crippled for 38 years. The man explained that he could not get into the water by himself.

John 5:5-7



Even though it was the Sabbath, Jesus told the man, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." The man was immediately healed and walked away.

John 5:8-9



The Jews claimed it was unlawful to perform miracles on the Sabbath, and they persecuted Jesus.

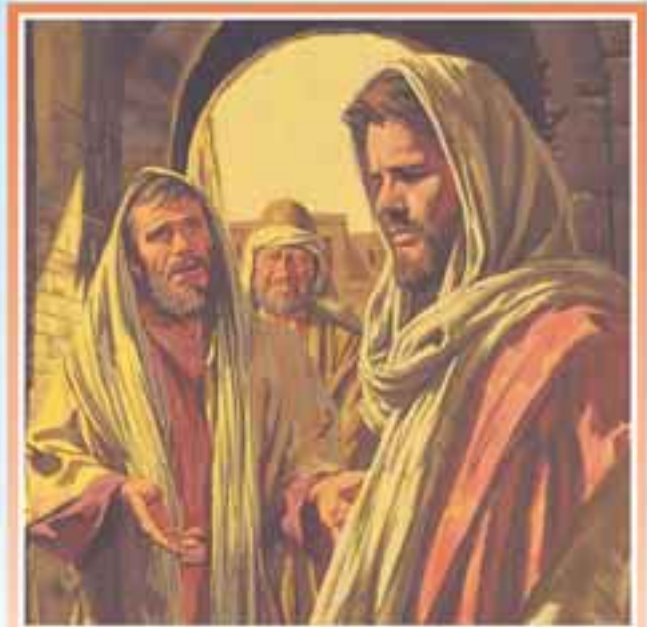
John 5:10–16



Jesus answered that He was doing the work of His Father.

John 5:17

JESUS FEEDS 5,000 PEOPLE



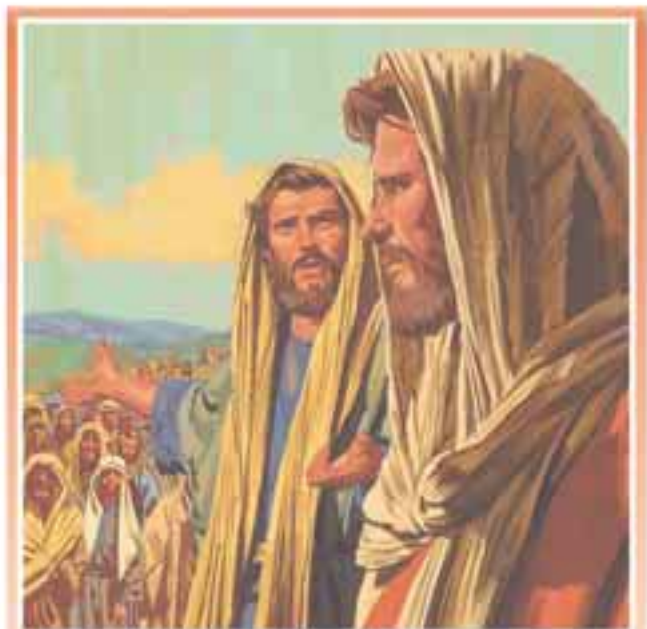
Some friends of John the Baptist came to Jesus and told Him that John had been killed. He had been killed because he told the king to repent.

Matthew 14:1-12



When Jesus heard this, He went to be alone. Many people knew He was there and went there too, hoping He would teach them. More than 5,000 people went to hear Him.

Matthew 14:13; Mark 6:44



After He had taught them, it was time to eat, and most of the people did not have any food. His disciples wanted the people to go to the villages, where they could buy food.

Matthew 14:15; Mark 6:36



The Savior, however, told the disciples to see if anyone had brought food. They found a boy who had five loaves of bread and two small fish.

Matthew 14:16–17; Mark 6:37–38; John 6:9



Jesus told all the people to sit down. Then He blessed the bread and the fish and divided the fish and broke the bread into pieces.

Matthew 14:18–19; Mark 6:39–41



When the disciples gave the food to the people, there was more than enough for everyone!

Matthew 14:20–21; Mark 6:41–44

I CAN BE A MISSIONARY

By Corliss Clayton

START



Pray for the missionaries.



Save money.



Invite a friend to Primary.



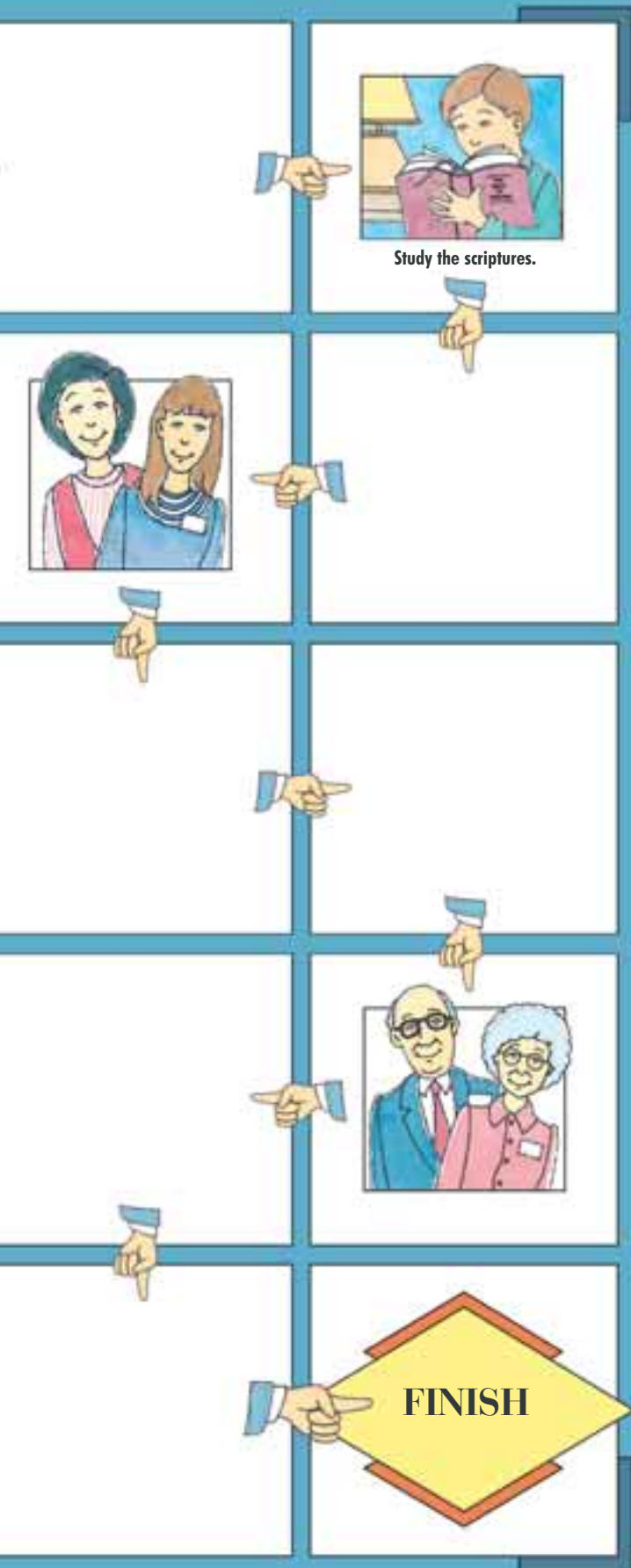
Learn to cook.



Family Rules
1. Make beds
2. Brush teeth

Obey family rules.

NOW!



As you play this game, you will learn some things you can do to be a missionary now and to prepare for a mission later on.

1 Open the magazine and place it where all the players can see the game board.

2 Have each player put a button or another small object on START. Then have the first player roll a die and move his or her playing piece that many spaces, following the hand directions.

3 If a player lands on a mission-preparation space, have him or her read about how to prepare for a mission and then take another turn. If a player lands on a space with a picture of missionaries, the player must think of and tell about another activity that will help him or her prepare for a mission—and then take another turn.

4 Remember, on a mission you should never go anywhere without your companion. So whoever finishes the game first keeps taking his or her turn and helps another player reach FINISH. Continue the game until all players have finished. □

Truth from Elijah

Gently ♩ = 80-88

The hearts of the chil - dren have turned to their fa - thers, Have

turned, — have turned, have turned, Be - cause of the truth they have

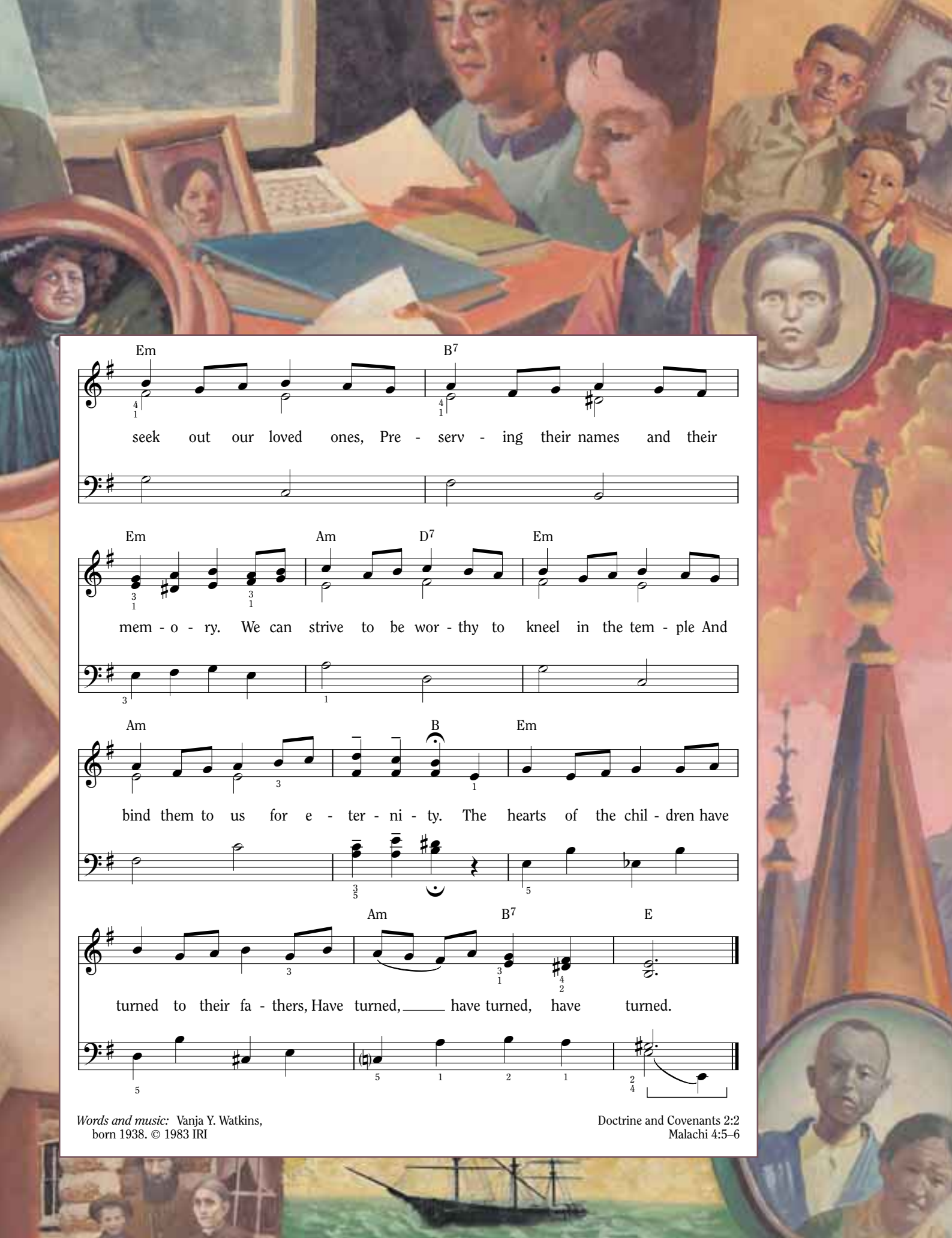
learned from E - li - jah, Have learned, — have learned, have

learned. And we as the chil - dren can

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a bass line. The first system starts with an Em chord and includes a fermata over the first measure. The second system includes Am, B7, and Em chords. The third system includes Am and B7 chords. The fourth system includes Em, Am, and D7 chords. Fingerings and articulation marks are provided throughout the score.

This song may be copied for incidental, noncommercial church or home use.

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD HULL



Em B7

seek out our loved ones, Pre - serv - ing their names and their

Em Am D7 Em

mem - o - ry. We can strive to be wor - thy to kneel in the tem - ple And

Am B Em

bind them to us for e - ter - ni - ty. The hearts of the chil - dren have

Am B7 E

turned to their fa - thers, Have turned, ____ have turned, have turned.

Words and music: Vanja Y. Watkins,
born 1938. © 1983 IRI

Doctrine and Covenants 2:2
Malachi 4:5-6

PROMISED BLESSINGS

By Diane S. Nichols

“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).



Romero had been looking forward to this day. He and his mother planned to go to the park. But before they could leave, his mother was called away to help a sick neighbor. Romero’s mother promised they would go to the park when she returned if he would do some chores while she was gone. Romero said he would.

After his mother left, Romero started to do the things she had asked him to do. Then his friend José came by. Romero remembered his mother’s promise that they would go to the park if he was obedient. He told José he couldn’t play because he had work to do. Romero’s mother was happy when she found he had done what she asked. She kept her promise, and they spent the afternoon at the park.

Sometimes our Father in Heaven asks us to do certain things and promises us blessings if we do them. Although we do not always receive the blessings immediately or even in this life, we *will* receive them if we are obedient.

One of the things Heavenly Father asks us to do is listen to the prophets and follow their teachings. If we do what they ask, our lives will be blessed.

In general conference each April and October, the prophet speaks to us for Heavenly Father. It is important to listen and do the things he asks us to do. Our prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, has asked us to be more like the Savior by being more forgiving and considerate. He has asked us to be obedient to our parents and kinder to our families. He has asked us to have family home evening and to pray and thank Heavenly Father for our blessings. He has taught us that our prayers are answered.



If we do what the prophet asks us to do, we will be doing what Heavenly Father wants us to do, and we will receive many blessings. Heavenly Father always keeps His promises.

Instructions

Find out what the prophet and apostles have asked us to do to help strengthen our families (see the January and July issues of the *Liahona*; see also “Hallmarks of a Happy Home,” pages 2–9 of this issue of the *Liahona*). Write some of these things on the large stones on the path on page 13. Cut out the house and pathway, and glue them onto heavy paper. Fold along the broken lines, and form a house. Glue each tab to the back edge of the corresponding part of the house (see illustration). Glue the pathway to the bottom of the house so that it leads to the door. When you do something written on one of the stones, color the stone.

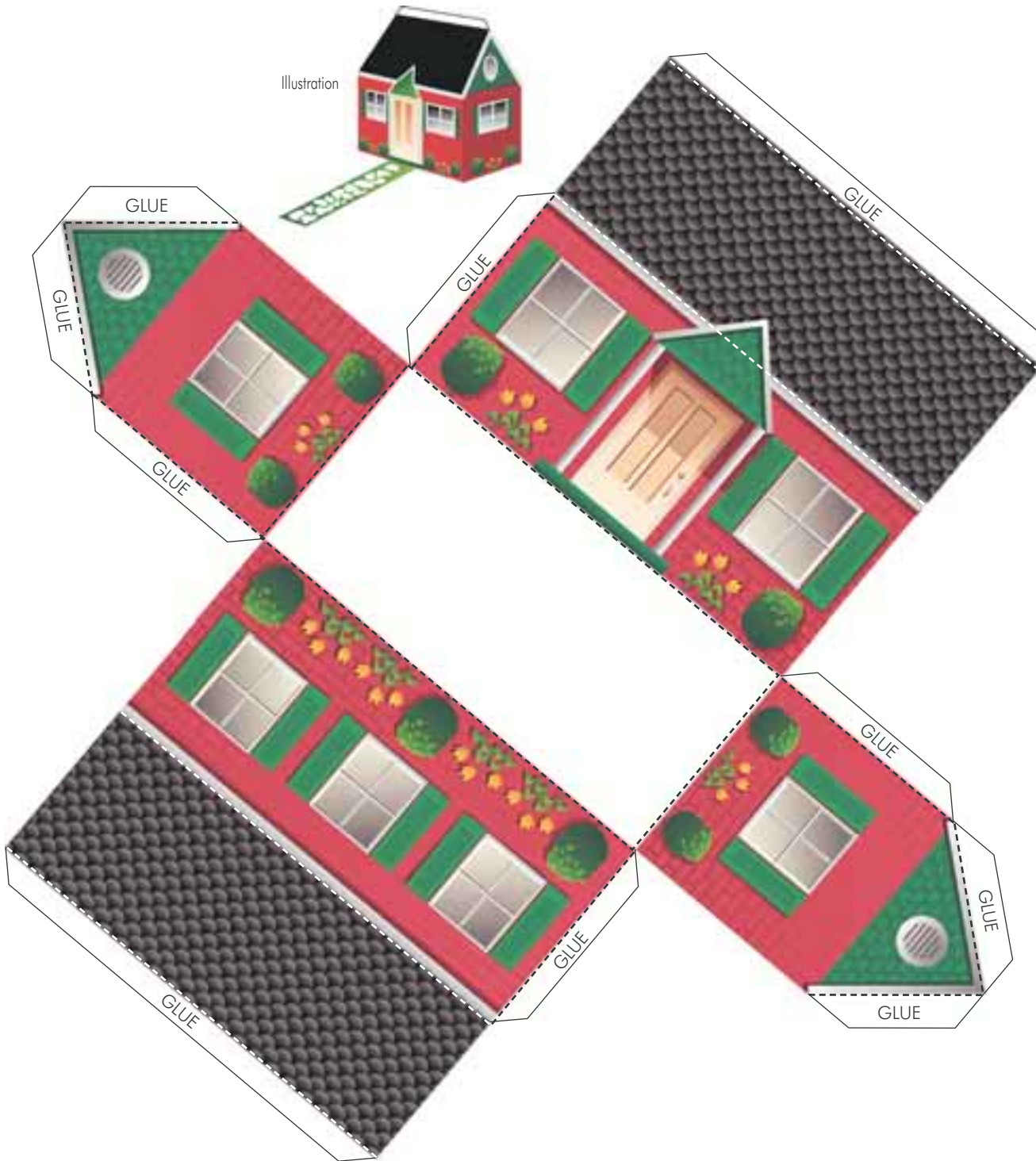
Sharing Time Ideas

1. *President Hinckley has asked us to keep the Sabbath holy. Divide into two groups. Have one group think of things they should do on Sunday. Have the second group think of things they do on Saturday to get ready for Sunday. Have the members of each group take turns acting out these things. Have the other group guess what they are doing. Remind them that when we do good things on the Sabbath, we are keeping a commandment and will feel closer to Heavenly Father.*

2. *Collect 10 to 15 small sticks, and label a paper bag or other container “Garbage Can.” Ask a child to break one of the sticks. Explain that using “garbage-can words”—words that are inappropriate or hurtful—can make our families weak like the single stick. We should throw these words away. Place the broken stick in the “garbage can.” Explain that instead of saying things that weaken our families, we should use words that*

strengthen them. Ask the children for words that strengthen families (for example, “thank you,” “please,” “you did a good job,” “may I help you”). Have each child who says a good word or phrase place one of the remaining sticks in a pile to create a bundle of sticks. Tie the sticks securely together, and ask a child

to try to break the bundle. Like the bundle of sticks, families are much stronger when family members build each other up by saying kind things. Sing a song or hymn about families. Encourage the children to share this activity in family home evening. □



NO BULLS IN

As told to Sheila R. and Francis M. Woodard

Every year my parents took me to visit Aunt Ruby and Uncle George, who lived on a farm. I enjoyed visiting them because there were so many things to see and do. I played in the barn, helped feed the animals, rode on the tractor, and explored their big red shed.

One time when I was nine years old, I was helping Uncle George feed the animals in the barn. “You sure are quiet this morning, Justin,” he said.

“I was thinking about what my Primary teacher said last week,” I told him.

“What did she say?” Uncle George asked as he threw some hay to one of the cows.

“She said making right choices will help me keep the promises I made to Heavenly Father when I was baptized. But it’s hard to *always* make the right choice.”

Uncle George nodded. “It is hard to always make correct choices. But when we live the gospel standards and follow the ‘strait and narrow path’ like the scriptures tell us to, the Lord will help us.”

I thought about the “strait and narrow path” for the rest of the morning. When we finished feeding the animals, Uncle George said, “Thanks for your help, Justin. What would you like to do now?”

“I’d like to go over to my friend Jeff’s, but Mom and Dad usually take me there.”

Tilting his hat back on his head, Uncle George said, “They’ve gone into town with Ruby. I can’t take you either, because I have to fix the tractor.”

He put his arm around my shoulders and led me to a big dry ditch. “If you get in this ditch,” he said, “you can follow it all the way to Jeff’s house. Can you do that?”



THE DITCH

I told him I was sure I could. Before I left, he gave me two warnings. One, I was to stay in the ditch. If I got out, I could get hurt or lost. Two, I was to keep going, even if I got tired. Then he promised me that if I followed his instructions, I would have no trouble reaching my friend's house.

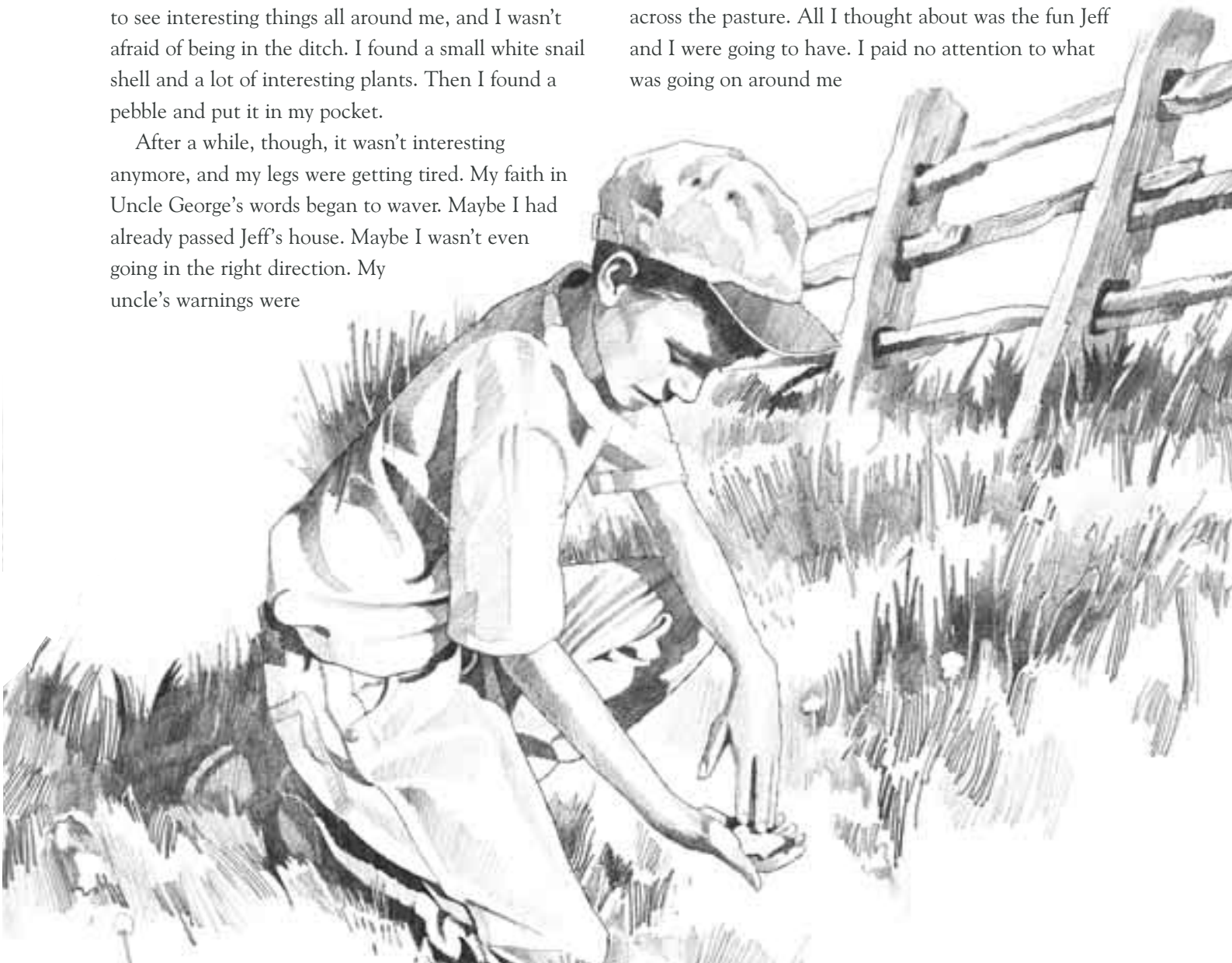
At first I was nervous. The grass on both sides of the ditch was so tall I couldn't see over it. But soon I began to see interesting things all around me, and I wasn't afraid of being in the ditch. I found a small white snail shell and a lot of interesting plants. Then I found a pebble and put it in my pocket.

After a while, though, it wasn't interesting anymore, and my legs were getting tired. My faith in Uncle George's words began to waver. Maybe I had already passed Jeff's house. Maybe I wasn't even going in the right direction. My uncle's warnings were

still clear in my mind, but I carefully climbed to the top of the ditch so I could see over the tall grass and find out where I was.

Happily, I saw that only a fence and a large pasture stood between me and Jeff's house. All I had to do was walk through the pasture, and I would be there. With my goal in sight, I forgot my uncle's warnings.

I slipped through a hole in the fence and started across the pasture. All I thought about was the fun Jeff and I were going to have. I paid no attention to what was going on around me



until I heard a loud snort and the snapping of breaking sticks. I turned around and saw a large bull charging toward me from the edge of the pasture.

Now I had a new goal—to reach the fence before the bull reached me. I knew the shortest distance between two points was a straight line, so I ran straight toward the hole in the fence I had climbed through earlier. I ran so fast I could hear the air whistling around my ears. All the time, I was silently praying that Heavenly Father would bless me to run faster than the bull.

The fence was getting closer, but so was the bull. I was sure I felt his hot breath on my neck as I dived through the fence to safety. He snorted loudly as he pushed his nose through the hole and realized he couldn't reach me.

My life had been spared. Heavenly Father had answered my prayer. My heart was full of gratitude to Him.

Now all I wanted to do was return to the “strait and narrow path” and follow my uncle’s instructions. I knew there were no bulls in the ditch. It was a safe place.

I had learned that my Primary teacher and Uncle George were right. There is great safety in choosing the right and following the correct path. I realized Heavenly Father would always help me stay on the “strait and narrow path” if I would listen and obey. □

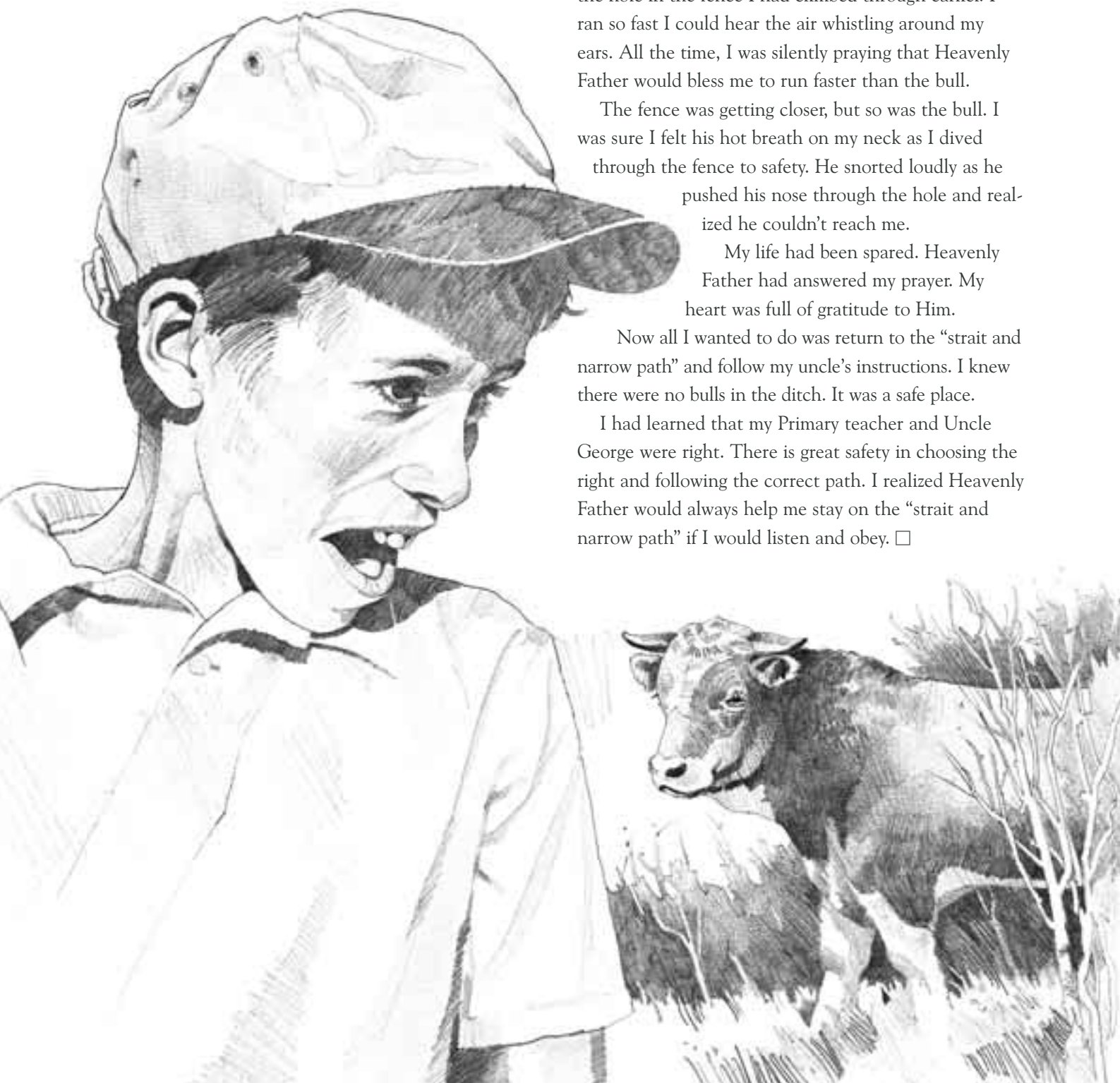




PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CRAIG DIMOND

Couple Missionaries

“The ways in which couples can serve are virtually limitless. . . . There is an opportunity to use almost any skill or talent with which the Lord has blessed you. . . . It is proper for a mature sister or couple to let their priesthood leaders know that they are willing and able to serve a mission. I urge you to do so.”

—Elder Robert D. Hales, “*Couple Missionaries: A Time to Serve*,” *Liahona*, July 2001, 31



“Our missionaries are going forth to different nations,” declared the Prophet Joseph Smith. “. . . The truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the great Jehovah shall say the work is done.” See “Latter-day Prophets Speak about Missionary Service,” page 10, and other articles about missionary work in this special edition of the *Liahona*.