

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

LIAHONA



LIAHONA



SEE PAGE 2



ON THE COVER

The bedroom of the Prophet Joseph Smith's parents in their 1820s frame home. See "Cradle of the Restoration," page 10. (Photograph by Craig Dimond.)



THE FRIEND COVER

Photo illustration by Steve Bunderson.

FEATURES

- 2 **FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE: LIVING WITH OUR CONVICTIONS**
PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY
- 10 **CRADLE OF THE RESTORATION**
- 18 **THE RICHNESS OF THE RESTORATION** ELDER NEAL A. MAXWELL
- 25 **VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE: BUILDING FAMILY UNITY THROUGH TEMPLE AND FAMILY HISTORY WORK**
- 32 **"AND HE GAVE SOME, APOSTLES"** EDWARD J. BRANDT
- 42 **LATTER-DAY SAINT VOICES: THE PRICE OF DISCIPLESHIP**
 - I NEEDED A BLESSING BRANDON J. MILLER
 - A BREAK IN THE CLOUDS ANA LIMA BRAXTON
 - NEW DREAMS FOR OLD MARÍA PATRICIA ROJAS V.
 - A TOUGH COWBOY ALLAN L. NOBLE
- 48 **USING THE SEPTEMBER 2001 LIAHONA**

ESPECIALLY FOR YOUTH

- 8 **ONE HUNDRED QUESTIONS** LANI RICKS
- 26 **ANA LUCRECIA MORALES: THE GIFT OF A POET** DON L. SEARLE
- 29 **SCRIPTURE STUDY SUGGESTIONS**
- 30 **LINE UPON LINE: THE MORTAL CONFLICT**
- 40 **THE SHAPE OF CHARACTER: CLASSIC INSIGHTS FROM PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY**

THE FRIEND

- 2 **"WHO IS THIS PROPHET?"** JANE MCBRIDE CHOATE
- 5 **A PROPHET'S EXAMPLE** PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON
- 6 **SHARING TIME: I CAN FOLLOW THE PROPHET** DIANE S. NICHOLS
- 8 **MAKING FRIENDS: MIYAKO TASHIRO OF OSAKA, JAPAN** MELVIN LEAVITT
- 11 **NEW TESTAMENT STORIES: THE MAN WITH THE EVIL SPIRITS; A WOMAN TOUCHES JESUS' CLOTHES**
- 16 **TRYING TO BE LIKE JESUS**
 - OBEYING MY PARENTS GUSTAVO ADOLFO LOAIZA VERGARA
 - PRAYER HELPS FRANCISCO JAVIER LOAIZA VERGARA



SEE PAGE 32

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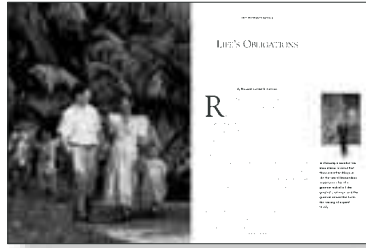
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LIFE'S GUIDANCE FROM THE PROPHET

How blessed we are to have a living prophet in these last days. What a life-stirring compass is the First Presidency Message by President Gordon B. Hinckley in the May 1999 *Liahona* (English). This message, "Life's Obligations," is so rich and touching. It has strengthened my testimony of the living prophet of God. I spend time every day reading portions of this message.

On one occasion, I went to a restaurant and took this message with me. One of my clients asked to read it. After reading it, he asked for a copy of it. This man confessed that the message is "inspired and really applies to present-day life."

*Attah Frederick,
Bauchi Branch,
Jos Nigeria District*

SIX-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER LOVES A LIAHONA

A *Liahona* (Portuguese) is a real blessing in my life. My six-year-old daughter loves it. When the magazine comes, she immediately asks me to read her stories from the children's section of the magazine.

*Vera Lucia Antoniassi Guerino,
Hortolândia Ward,
Campinas Brazil Castelo Stake*

BOUND COLLECTION OF LIAHONAS

I have been collecting issues of the *Liahona* (Spanish) for many years. Each year it is a great joy to receive the last issue, so I can bind a year's worth into one volume. These volumes are an invaluable source of information.

The *Liahona* has an important place in my little library, which also includes manuals, books, and other Church publications. My collection of *Liahonas* dates from the conference reports of 1970 to the latest issue of the current year. It has given me greater understanding of the gospel, served as a practical guide for daily living, and helped me prepare for lessons, talks, and other Church assignments. It also provides positive entertainment that edifies me and motivates me to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Daniel Alarcón,
Samanes Ward,
Guayaquil Ecuador Alborada Stake*

A BLESSING AND A GUIDE

The *Liahona* (Spanish) has come to be one of the most beautiful blessings our family receives each month. In it, we find the answers to many of our prayers. The magazine is an inspired publication, and it speaks to us personally and directly about how much Heavenly Father loves us. The articles by the First Presidency and other General Authorities help us understand the scriptures better. As a family, we are very grateful for the spiritual strength we obtain and the knowledge we gain through the magazine.

*Maria Corina Smith de Cardona,
San Miguelito Second Branch,
San Miguelito Panama Stake*

Living with Our Convictions

By President Gordon B. Hinckley



As members of the Church, we have become as a city set upon a hill which cannot be hid (see 3 Nephi 12:14). Whether we like it or not, each of us is set apart from the world. We are partakers of the truth, and with that comes a responsibility. Our responsibilities are personal because testimony is a personal thing.

In this dispensation, when the Lord declared this to be “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth” (D&C 1:30), we were immediately put in a position from which we cannot shrink and which we each must face with humility and courage. Every true member of the Lord’s Church who lives and breathes the spirit of the gospel of the Master knows something of that feeling as he or she associates with others. But once having gained a testimony, we are to live with it. We are to live with our conscience. We are to live with our God.

It is not only converts who sometimes pass through difficult struggles and who may know discouragement and heartache as they explain their Church membership to family and friends. In a general sense, this is the experience of all who seek to hold to the iron rod as they walk through the mists of the world. It was ever thus.

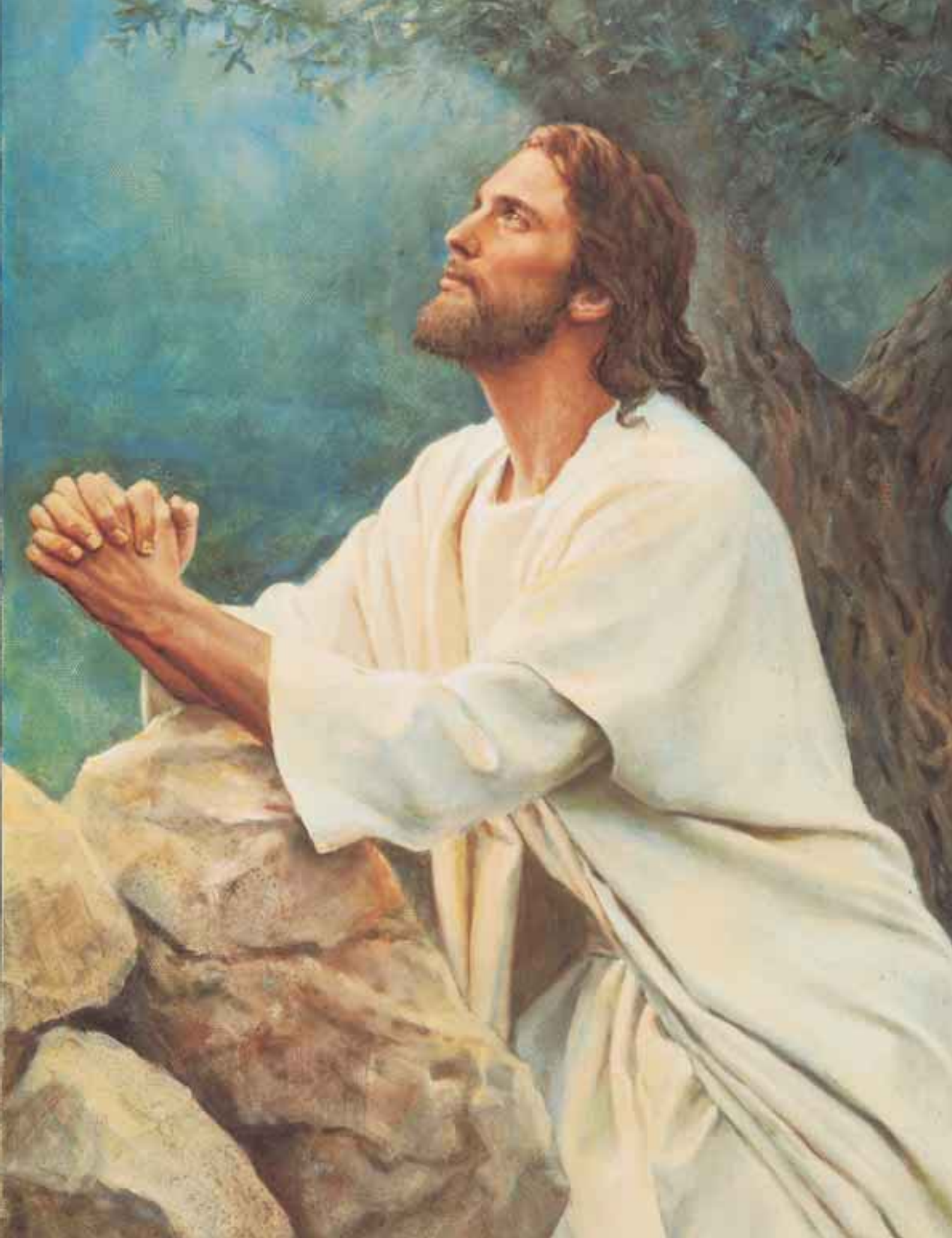
The price of discipleship is personal courage. The price of adherence to conscience is personal courage.

COURAGE IN ALL DISPENSATIONS

There is no more poignant picture in all history than that of Jesus in Gethsemane and upon the cross, alone: the Redeemer of mankind, the Savior of the world, bringing to pass the Atonement.

I remember being with President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) in the Garden of Gethsemane in Jerusalem. We could sense, if only in a very small degree, the terrible struggle that took place there, a struggle so intense, as Jesus wrestled alone in the spirit, that blood came from every pore (see Luke 22:44; D&C 19:18). We recalled the betrayal by one who had been called to a position of trust. We recalled that evil men laid brutal hands upon the Son of God. We recalled that lonely figure on the

There is no more poignant picture in all history than that of Jesus in Gethsemane and upon the cross, alone: the Redeemer of mankind, the Savior of the world, bringing to pass the Atonement.



cross, crying out in anguish, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46). Yet, courageously, the Savior of the world moved forward to bring about the Atonement in our behalf.

Inner courage is a necessary virtue of those who follow the Lord. When the tyranny of religious oppression was smothering Europe in the 16th century, there arose a man here and there who stood up courageously. I believe that the Reformers were inspired of God to lay the foundation for a time when “another angel” would “fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6). It was in Germany with personal courage to act alone that Martin Luther proclaimed his 95 theses. That which he and his associates and followers endured is a matter of history. As they led the way to a more enlightened age, they walked almost alone amid the scoffing of others.

The great Prophet of this dispensation was likewise a man of courageous convictions. The 14-year-old boy who came out of the woods was soon persecuted by some, and he was hated throughout his life. There are few more heart-moving pictures than that of the Prophet Joseph Smith’s walking his courageous way with only a handful of faithful followers. He gave his life for his testimony of the truth.

In every dispensation the followers of the Lord have known of the courage it takes to choose to serve God rather than to serve the opinions of the crowd.

A CONVERT’S COURAGE

I think of a friend whom I knew when I was a missionary in London many years ago. He came to our door through the rain one night. I answered his knock and invited him in.

He said, as I remember, “I have to talk to someone. I’m all alone.”

I asked what the problem was.

He said, “When I joined the Church, my father told me to get out of his house and never come back. A few months later my athletic club dropped me from membership. Last month my boss fired me because I am a member of this Church. And last night the girl I love said she would never marry me because I’m a Mormon.”

I said, “If this has cost you so much, why don’t you leave the Church and go back to your father’s home, to your club, to the job that meant so much to you, and marry the girl you think you love?”

He said nothing for what seemed a long time. Then, putting his head in his hands, he sobbed as if his heart would break. Finally he looked up through his tears and said, “I couldn’t do that. I know this is true, and if it were to cost me my life, I could not give it up.”

He picked up his wet hat and walked to the door and went out into the rain. As I watched him, I thought of the power of conscience, the loneliness of faith, and the strength and power of personal testimony.

COURAGE AND COMMITMENT

I should like to say to members of the Church, particularly to young men and women of the Church, that I hope you may come to know inner personal courage as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For this is the requirement of the Lord as we journey through our mortal probation, as we show to Him and to ourselves that we indeed “love the Lord [our] God with all [our] heart, and with all [our] soul, and with all [our] mind” and that we “love [our] neighbour as [ourselves]” (Matthew 22:37, 39).

It takes resolution to be virtuous when those around you scoff at virtue.

It takes commitment to abstain from harmful substances when those around you scoff at sobriety and at being free from drugs.

It takes courage to be a man or woman of integrity when those around you forsake gospel principles for expediency or convenience.

It takes love in our hearts to speak in peaceful testimony of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ to those who would mock Him and belittle and demean Him.

There will be times that demand courage for each of us because disciples of the Lord are to live with their consciences. Disciples of the Lord are to live with their principles. Disciples of the Lord are to live with their convictions. Each of us is to live with his or her testimony. Unless we do, we will be miserable and dreadfully alone.

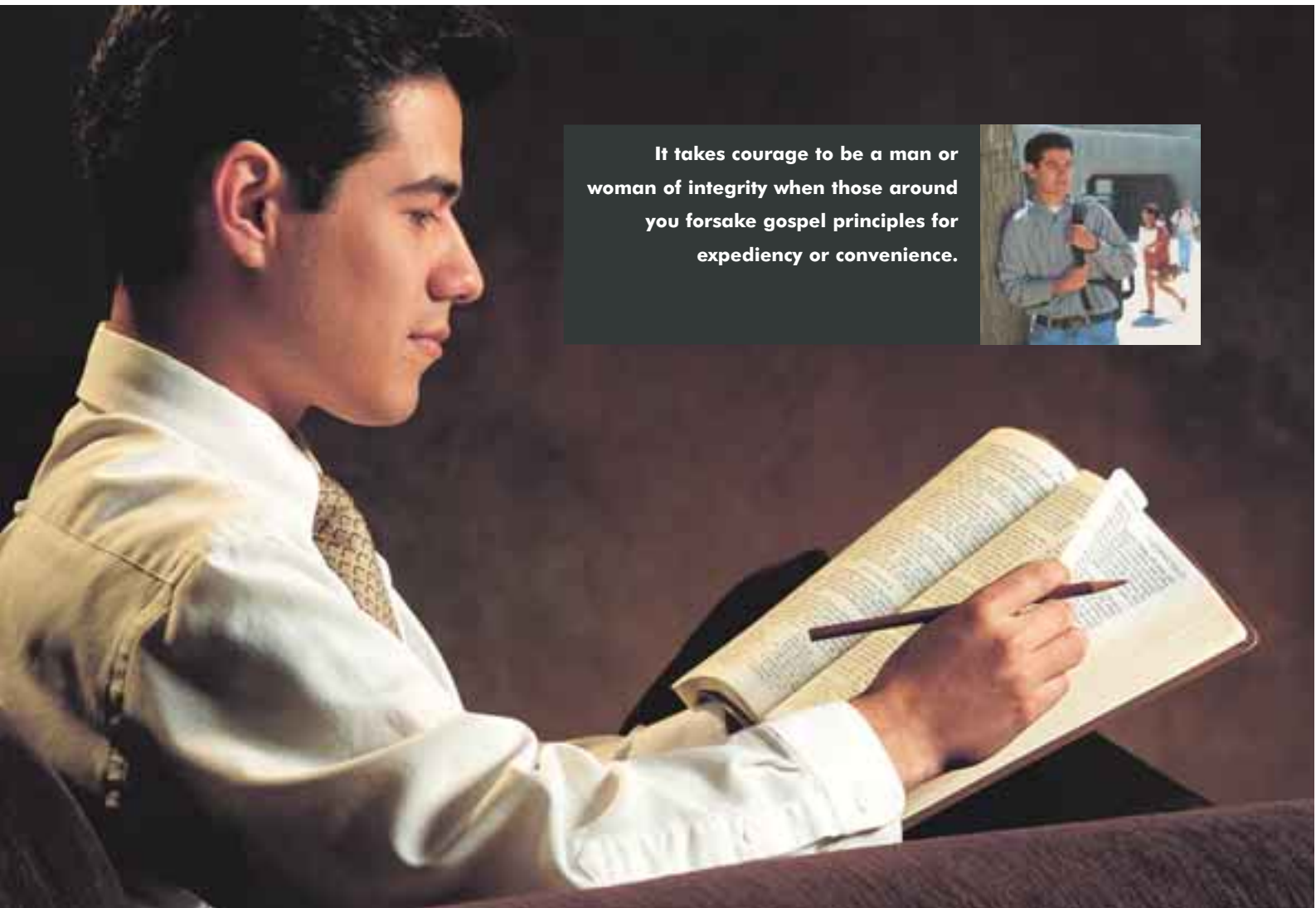
WE ARE NOT ALONE

Yet while there may be thorns and disappointments, while there may be heartache, even heartbreak, there can be peace and comfort and strength from the Lord for those who follow Him. For it is the Lord Himself who has said:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matthew 11:28–29).

It is the Lord who has said that if we keep the commandments, “the Holy Ghost shall be [our] constant



It takes courage to be a man or woman of integrity when those around you forsake gospel principles for expediency or convenience.



companion” (D&C 121:46) to buoy us up, to teach us, lead us, comfort us, and sustain us. To obtain this companionship, we need to ask for it, to live for it, to be loyal to the Lord.

I think Mormon knew very well from his own experience the truth of his words that the “Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God” (Moroni 8:26). Though we may sometimes be alone while among those of the world, we need not be lonely, for the Lord has given us the Holy Ghost to be our companion to walk with us.

In addition, the Lord has given us others with whom we may associate and thereby build up our spirits and strengthen our courage—disciples of like mind, of like heart, of like spirit. As the Apostle Paul said, we no longer need be “strangers . . . , but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19). To the Thessalonians, he wrote of sustaining one another:

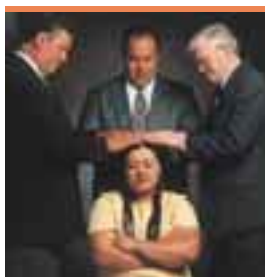
“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another. . . .

“And we beseech you . . . to know them which labour among you . . . ;

“And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake” (1 Thessalonians 5:11–13).

Though discipleship with the Lord requires times of standing humbly and courageously apart, the Lord will not forsake us. He also gives us the association of others who can edify and strengthen us as we go about our work of blessing others in the world. And if we are prayerful and loyal to Him and His commandments, the Lord’s

promise can be applicable to us: “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88).



We need not be lonely, for the Lord has given us the Holy Ghost to be our companion. And He has given us others to build up our spirits and strengthen our courage.

This is a promise from the Lord. I believe it. I bear testimony to you of its truth. May the Lord bless all who step out of the darkness of the world into the light of the everlasting gospel. May He bless us all to walk humbly and courageously and to know in our hearts that peace which comes from squaring one’s life with principle—the “peace . . . which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7).

Let us rejoice in the knowledge that although we are to stand with courage as we travel through mortality and even through our trials, God will not leave us without His guidance and sustaining power.

May we go forward with our righteous convictions. May we walk in truth and in faith and in love. For if we will do so, we will be upheld and strengthened by the Lord: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I

unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). □

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

1. Each member of the Church should take personal responsibility to be as a city set upon a hill which cannot be hid (see 3 Nephi 12:14).
2. Those who live true to their consciences and gospel principles receive peace and strength from the Lord.
3. We have been given the association of the Holy Ghost and fellow members who can edify and strengthen us as we live true to the Savior’s teachings.



100 Questions

The list was intimidating until I discovered the answers all in one place.

Since my Primary days, I have known that the Book of Mormon is the word of God. I also knew I should read it every night. Unfortunately, I somehow missed out on the search, ponder, and pray aspect of scripture study.

During my junior year of high school, a nonmember friend, Jennifer Cotton, handed me several sheets of paper titled, in bold letters, “Questions for Lani.” I stuffed the sheets of paper into my backpack and rushed off to class.

Later that week, the questions surfaced in my backpack. There were exactly 100 questions about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—100 questions!

I felt overwhelmingly inadequate. I pleaded with Heavenly Father to help me answer these questions. I felt prompted to open my scriptures. The first verse I read was, “Therefore, ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for he that asketh, receiveth; and unto him that knocketh, it shall be opened” (3 Nephi 27:29).

Tears welled up in my eyes, and I knew that with Heavenly Father’s help I would find the answers.

I spent hours studying the scriptures. I was amazed to find verses answering questions that had seemed so intimidating hours before.

The next day, I handed Jennifer her answers, along with a copy of the Book of Mormon. She tearfully expressed her gratitude.

Jennifer called that night to say she had finished reading 1 Nephi. I cannot explain the joy I felt. Mosiah 18:9 tells us that true believers are willing “to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things.” Jennifer gave me an opportunity to stand as a witness—and later an opportunity to see her baptized into the Church.

I now have a strong testimony of the Book of Mormon. No matter what my need or problem, I can turn to my scriptures. Through searching, pondering, and praying, I know I will find the answer. □

Lani Ricks is a member of the BYU 35th Ward, Brigham Young University 15th Stake.

By Lani Ricks
ILLUSTRATED BY STEVE KROPP





TOP: The newly restored cooper shop, frame home, and barn look as they did when the Smiths lived here.

ABOVE INSET: In 1820 this “beautiful grove [was] sufficiently dense and removed from the road to give the necessary seclusion [young Joseph] desired; and here on the morning of a beautiful, clear day in that early spring time, he knelt for the first time in all his life to make a personal, direct, verbal appeal to God in prayer.”¹

Cradle of the *Restoration*

The Joseph Smith Sr. family farm, with its grove of trees and log home, is sacred ground where the restored gospel of Jesus Christ was nurtured.



Here, beginning in the spring of 1820, just south of Palmyra, New York, the 40 hectares of the Joseph Smith Sr. farm became sacred space—holy ground.

Here in a grove of trees, Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to 14-year-old Joseph Smith Jr. Here the Smith family, who were the first to hear of the heavenly appearance, believed their son and brother Joseph. Here the angel Moroni appeared to the young prophet on numerous occasions and told him of a book written upon gold plates, which gave “an account of the former inhabitants of this continent” (Joseph Smith—History 1:34).

After 21-year-old Joseph received the plates in 1827, it was here—in the frame home and the cooper shop—that he hid the sacred records to protect them until he

could translate their inscriptions and publish them as the Book of Mormon.

And so it was that in the dawning of the dispensation of the fulness of times, the Smith family farm became the cradle where the restored gospel of Jesus Christ was placed, protected, and nurtured. Today the log home, frame home, cooper shop (a place where wooden casks are made and repaired), and barn have been restored to their original state, making it easier for us to envision the events that took place here. The Sacred Grove is a short walk away, and on a small hill overlooking the farm is a new house of the Lord—the Palmyra New York Temple.

Following are photographs of the Joseph Smith Sr. farm with a brief review of some events that took place here during the early years of the Restoration.



ABOVE: Of the evening of 21 September 1823, Lucy Mack Smith, the Prophet's mother, noted, Joseph "retired to his bed in quite a serious and contemplative state of mind."² Joseph later wrote of that night: "While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room. . . . A personage appeared at my bedside. . . . He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni."³



ABOVE: "We had a snug log-house, neatly furnished,"⁴ wrote Lucy Mack Smith of the log home with its two rooms on the ground floor and two sleeping rooms upstairs.



ABOVE: The kitchen in the log house was likely the site of many intimate family discussions and much enjoyable time spent together. After the Smiths were unable to make the last payment on the frame home, they eventually moved back into the log house in 1829.

RIGHT: A few years after the Smith family moved into the log home, 24-year-old Alvin, the oldest son, planned and began construction on a frame house. "To the neighbors who watched the progress of the new house, he often said: 'I am going to have a nice, pleasant room for father and mother to sit in, and everything arranged for their comfort. They shall not work any more as they have done.' But Alvin never lived to see the house completed."⁵ In the middle of November 1823, he became ill and died.







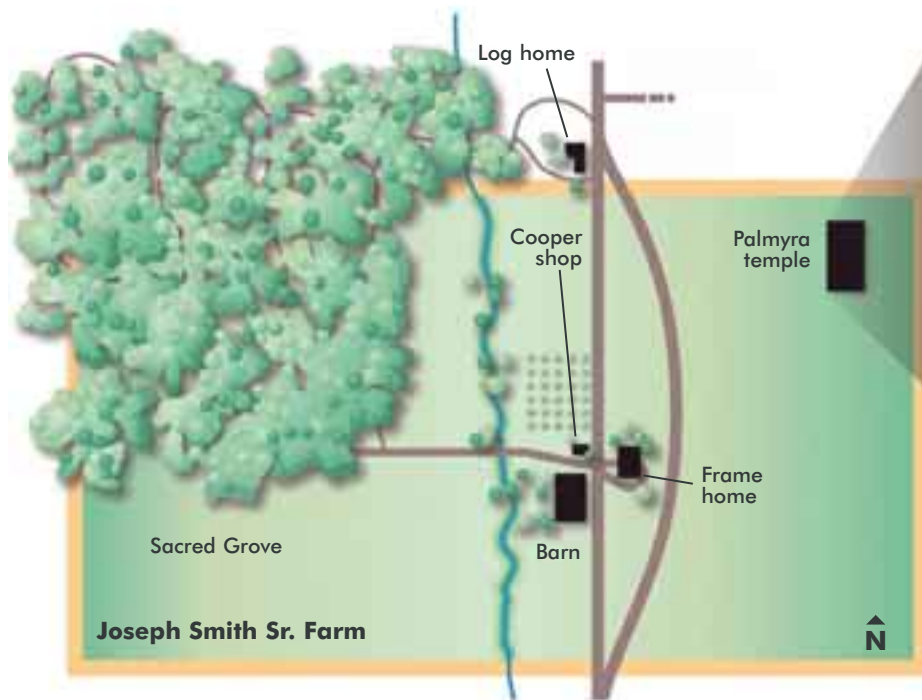
In the frame home (ABOVE) and its kitchen (ABOVE RIGHT), family prayers and Bible study were a regular part of life. Son William remembered, "Father used to carry his spectacles in his vest pocket, and when we boys saw him feel for his 'specs,' we knew that was a signal to get ready for prayer, and if we did not notice it mother would say, . . . 'get ready for prayers.' After the prayer we had a song."⁶

LEFT: Here, one evening, Joseph's sisters Catherine and Sophronia were snuggled in the off-kitchen bedroom when someone noticed a group of men coming toward the house. Joseph sprang to action, took the plates wrapped in cloth, and hid them in bed between the girls, saying, "Be as if you are asleep." Two men came into the room, one with a lantern, saw the sleeping girls, looked under the bed, and left.⁷



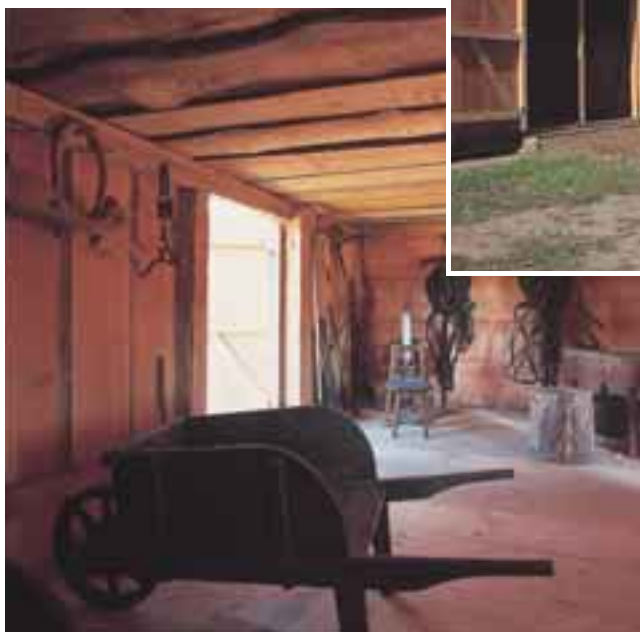
ABOVE: The parlor of the frame home, with its windows facing west toward the Sacred Grove, was a favorite place for the Smith family to talk. Here Joseph often shared what he was learning. His mother recorded that following Moroni's visit, "Joseph continued to receive instructions from the Lord, and we continued to get the children together every evening for the purpose of listening while he gave us a relation of the same."⁸ RIGHT INSET: The bedroom of Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith on the main floor of the frame home.



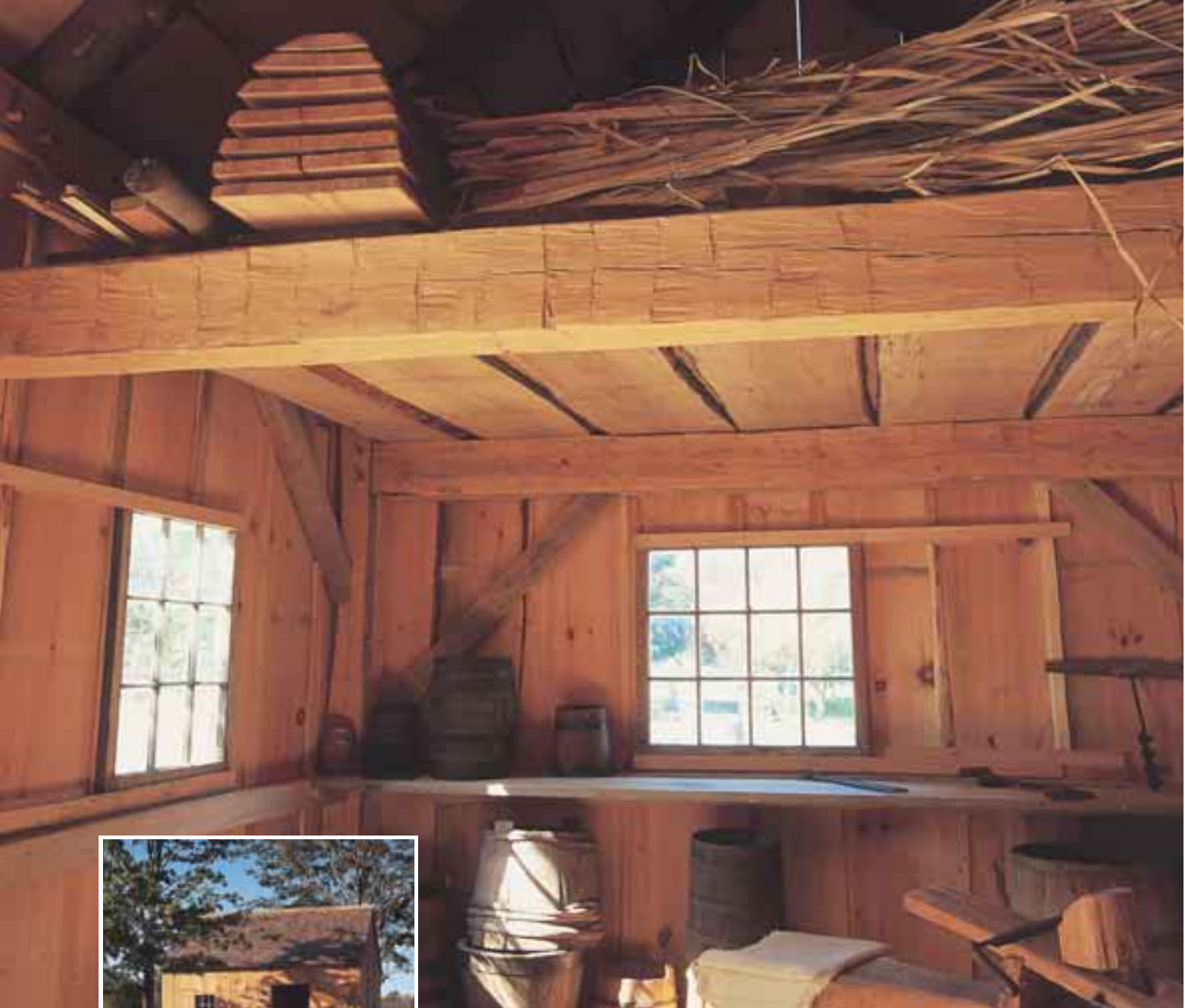


The Palmyra New York Temple was dedicated by President Gordon B. Hinckley on 6 April 2000, exactly 170 years after the Church was organized in nearby Fayette, New York, and 180 years after young Joseph Smith knelt in the grove of trees near where the temple now stands. In dedicating the temple, President Hinckley asked our Heavenly Father: "Wilt Thou accept of this Thy holy house. It represents the efforts of those who love Thee and who love Thy Son. It carries on its entablature the words 'Holiness to the Lord, The House of the Lord.' It is Thine, dear Father. We would be so grateful if Thou were to visit it with Thy presence in commemoration of Thine earlier appearance in the nearby Sacred Grove 180 years ago. Let Thy Holy Spirit abide here."

The 40 hectares of the Smith farm include the Sacred Grove, log home, frame home, barn, and cooper shop. The recently dedicated Palmyra New York Temple is located in the northeast corner of the Smiths' original farm. The village of Palmyra is north of the Smith farm, and the Hill Cumorah is nearly five kilometers southeast of the farm site.



ABOVE: Barn and cooper shop. LEFT: Joseph Smith Sr. and his sons worked hard to clear their forested land so they would have tillable farmland. They managed to clear 12 hectares while living in the log home and 12 more while living in the frame home. They also had up to 1,500 maple trees, from which they gathered sap in the spring and converted it into molasses and sugar. The barn was the center of these activities in addition to the daily caring for crops and animals.



Joseph moved the wooden box and gold plates from beneath the hearth in the frame home. He hid the plates in the loft of the cooper shop (ABOVE INSET) and buried the empty chest under the floorboards. That night a mob tore up the floor and smashed the empty chest but failed to search the loft just above their heads (ABOVE). □

NOTES

1. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:53–54.
2. *History of Joseph Smith*, edited by Preston Nibley (1958), 74.
3. Joseph Smith—History 1:30–33.
4. *History of Joseph Smith*, 65.
5. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:32.
6. Quoted in Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:35.
7. Mary Dean Hancock, “The Three Sisters of Joseph Smith,” transcript, pages iii–7, RLDS Archives. Mary Dean Hancock is a granddaughter of Catherine Smith Salisbury.
8. *History of Joseph Smith*, 82.



The RICHNESS of the RESTORATION

By Elder Neal A. Maxwell
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The restored gospel dispels doubt and despair, giving us assurance concerning immortality and God’s great plan of happiness.

I begin by noting some indicators from the vexing times in which we live. This context is worth pondering, if only briefly, since it is the setting, day in and out, in which you and I labor in this last dispensation.

DOUBT AND DESPAIR

The many intervening centuries since Jesus’ mortal messiahship seem to have worked against the faith of many in the last days. Peter’s prophecy about the attitude of latter-day scoffers is thus steadily being fulfilled: “Where is the promise of [Christ’s] coming? . . . All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (2 Peter 3:4). Hence, repetition on the human landscape comes to be viewed by many

as the absence of any discernible, divine purpose.

The resulting indifference adds to iniquity, and iniquity brings its inevitable harvest of bitter despair (see Moroni 10:22; D&C 45:27; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:30). Moreover, as the love of many waxes cold, a massive failure occurs with regard to keeping both the first and second great commandments (see Matthew 22:36–40; 24:12).

Unsurprisingly, those in despair question life’s meaning, saying, “Is this all there is to life?” Even their conquests and achievements turn out finally to be empty. Illustratively, MGM’s Louis B. Mayer, once the powerful king of Hollywood’s hill, at the very end of his life said despairingly from his hospital bed, “Nothing matters. Nothing matters.”¹

FLEETING PLEASURES

Those who “live without God in the world” anxiously glean their few and fleeting satisfactions, but they are

The Restoration offers a rich harvest of saving doctrines and eternal blessings in a world where those who live without God gain few and fleeting satisfactions.



unable to find real happiness (see Mosiah 27:31; Mormon 2:13). Today many are caught up in one form or another of the “club-and-pub” culture. Others focus on the popular and pervasive substitutes for real religion—sports and politics. All this is accompanied by political churning as you and I watch the secular “Princes come, Princes go, An hour of pomp and show they know.”²

As in the days of Noah, many individuals become preoccupied with life’s routine, such as “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” (Matthew 24:38; see also verses 36–39). Many of those comfortably situated say, “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” (Revelation 3:17), while being confused about causality, saying, “My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth” (Deuteronomy 8:17). It is much today as in ancient Israel when “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6; 21:25). In our time, “every man walketh in his own way, and after . . . the likeness of the world” (D&C 1:16), which might be called everyman ethical relativism—and we are swamped by it in our time.

SELFISHNESS AND SKEPTICISM

Shorn of spiritual memory, people thus “do their own thing,” resulting in an uninspired, unanchored individualism that rejects the need for spiritual submissiveness, which, after all, is one of the great purposes of life’s trek. Ancient Israel was advised, “And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was

in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no” (Deuteronomy 8:2).

Ignorant of the plan of salvation, many simply do not know what the journey of life is all about. Therefore, modern selfishness and skepticism brush aside the significance of the Savior, considering Jesus merely “a man” (Mosiah 3:9) or “a thing of naught” (1 Nephi 19:9).

So positioned intellectually, these people say “it is not reasonable that such a being as a Christ shall come” (Helaman 16:18; see also verses 17–20). Should some prophesied things happen, skeptics say the prophets have merely “guessed right” (Helaman 16:16).

Secular people, of whom there are more and more, insist on seeing instead of walking by faith (see 2 Corinthians 5:7). In their passion to see, they fall into the trap of “looking beyond the mark” (Jacob 4:14), including failing to notice the sprouting leaves on the fig tree signaling that summer is nigh (see D&C 45:37; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:38–39).

In such a context, those trying to spread the gospel’s glorious truths often encounter people, as did Ether, whose reactions to his “great and marvelous” prophecies were “they did not believe, because they saw them not” (Ether 12:5).

“KEPT FROM THE TRUTH”

Farther along the spectrum of the human landscape, the honorable of the earth do so commendably well with less than full gospel light. You and I know many of them; they are wonderful and decent people. These individuals, like some followers of John the Baptist,

simply do not yet know. Asked if they had received the gift of the Holy Ghost, John's followers replied, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" (Acts 19:2; see also verses 1–6). Among the honorable of the earth are so many individuals "who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it" (D&C 123:12).

The Restoration, of course, provides the resplendent remedy with such high relevancy for our times. When accompanied by the spirit of truth, the Restoration proves not only informing and inspiring but also convincing! (see D&C 50:21–22).

Some, however, must first be chastened by afflictions, death, fear, terror, famine, and pestilence before they will be stirred to remember God (see Helaman 12:3). Only a comparative few are "in a preparation to hear the word" (Alma 32:6), but for these, "the word [has] a . . . more powerful effect . . . than . . . anything else" (Alma 31:5). Yet even these comparative few still need a teacher:

"And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?"

"And he said, How can I, *except some man should guide me?* And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him" (Acts 8:30–31; emphasis added).

ENCOMPASSED ABOUT

Continuing the sampling of the societal spectrum, there are the lukewarm Church members who lack dedication and who are not valiant in their testimony of

Jesus (see D&C 76:79). These often fear losing either their place in the secular synagogue or missing out on the praise of men (see John 12:42–43). Some members are like the earlier Amulek, who was called and would not hear; he really "knew," yet he "would not know" (Alma 10:6). These members, like Amulek, may even have experienced feeling the redeeming, loving power of God, but they do not "feel so now" (Alma 5:26). Isn't it marvelous, by the way, that the long-suffering Lord reclaimed, tutored, and later used Amulek to declare especially powerful teachings!

Fortunately, in the midst of all these things, so many Church members are sincerely striving for consecration. They seek first to build up the kingdom of God and establish His righteousness (see Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38). These members, in spite of their individual trials and discouragements, nevertheless, rally again and again and say, "Shall we not go on in so great a cause?" (D&C 128:22).

Soberingly, we are also advised, "Behold, the enemy is combined" (D&C 38:12). Faithful Latter-day Saints will thus surely be encompassed round about (see D&C 76:29), yet we can still develop our communities of Saints who are spiritually "one, the children of Christ" (4 Nephi 1:17).

SCRIPTURES AS SPIRITUAL MEMORY

We should not really be surprised at how some of the foregoing reflect the absence or neglect of the holy scriptures. History tells of those who, without sacred

As beneficiaries of Restoration blessings, we are recipients of "so much light and so much knowledge" about the meaning and purpose of life, the character of the Father and the Son, and the work and glory of the plan of salvation.



records, soon denied the Creator! (see Omni 1:17). The untaught can, so quickly, become unbelieving. They form a rising generation who do not understand the words of prophets and who do not believe in the Resurrection of Christ, as when “there arose another generation . . . which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel” (Judges 2:10; see also Mosiah 26:1–4).

Holy scriptures testify powerfully, but they also familiarize us with the history of what God has done for His people. This spiritual memory is so essential. Consider this relevant verse, often neglected in favor of the special verse it precedes: “Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts” (Moroni 10:3).

Holy scriptures, when searched and believed, help us to “remember,” as it were, from the sacred records. These are part of the institutional memory of the kingdom of God. Hence, Alma observed to his son Helaman how sacred records, in effect, “have enlarged the memory of this people” (Alma 37:8).

VITAL KNOWLEDGE RESTORED

The Restoration brought back such sweeping spiritual substance, including the reality of the Resurrection, but it also brought back a vital revelatory process. Please note the blend: “And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood” (Moses 7:62).

“God . . . saw that it was expedient that man should know concerning the things whereof he had appointed unto them;

“Therefore he sent angels to converse with them, . . .

“And they began from that time forth to call on his name; therefore God conversed with men, and made known unto them the plan of redemption, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world” (Alma 12:28–30).

The Restoration, for instance, provides so much more truth concerning both the character of the Father and the nature of His plan! Elder George Q. Cannon (1827–1901) of the



Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “There is in the plan of salvation, which God our heavenly Father has revealed, perfect love; mercy and justice, and every other attribute which pertains to the character of Deity are perfectly illustrated in the plan of salvation which he has revealed for man’s guidance.”³ However, Elder Cannon lamented, “the difficulty today is, that the people do not believe that God is a being of this character.”⁴

It is so in our time too. No wonder King Benjamin pled, “Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend” (Mosiah 4:9).

There are a few among us who believe in God but do not want to let Him be God; they would limit Him in terms of character and attributes. Reassuringly, in two adjoining verses, the Lord said tersely, “I am able to do mine own work” (2 Nephi 27:20–21). Brothers and sisters, that is about as nice a way as God could say to us that He can handle it!

SOLUTIONS TO HUMAN ILLS

The richness of the Restoration dispels doubt and despair with regard to the meaning of life, mitigating misery and giving us assurance concerning immortality and God’s “great plan of happiness”! (see Alma 42:8). The Lord’s ways are higher and more effective ways (see Isaiah 55:9).

Not a day passes in the television news or in the press

without our seeing some secular solutions being sincerely advanced to solve vexing human problems. These solutions usually involve lower ways, however sincerely offered they are, and they resemble trying to play shuffleboard on a slippery hillside, using a twisted stick for a cue, with a misshapen lump for a puck.

The Restoration, to mix metaphors, is like a harvest basket, which is a “good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over” (Luke 6:38). This abundant harvest spares us from hungering because of doctrinal deprivation. Without this fulness, however, some who are malnourished struggle with adversity while trying to believe in a God of loving purpose. Each of the Restoration’s key doctrines, by itself, would help us greatly. However, when “shaken together,” these doctrines can produce much stronger faith through their vital nourishment. The harvest is not only abundant and “running over,” but it also brings back the most vital “plain and precious things” (1 Nephi 13:40)—the balanced essentials.

THE QUESTION OF SUFFERING

Consider one example of a consequence of deprivation. Some, doctrinally perplexed, lament, “If God is good and all powerful, why does He permit so much human suffering? Why does He allow so much evil to be in the world He created?” A very prominent religious leader in England several decades ago spoke of this with unusual candor: “All of my life I have struggled to find the purpose of living. I have tried to answer three questions which

The harvest of the Restoration is not only abundant and “running over,” but it also brings back the most vital “plain and precious things”—the balanced essentials.



always seemed to be fundamental: the problem of eternity; the problem of human personality; and the problem of evil. I have failed. I have solved none of them. . . . And I believe no one will ever solve them.”⁵

Without Restoration fulness, this problem is understandably poignant and persistent! Without the Restoration’s light on the plan of salvation, trying to comprehend this life is like trying to understand a three-act play while seeing only the second act. Without knowing beginnings and endings, the middle becomes muddled. What is really going on? Is there a director who will make sense of it all? Does the plot have purpose? Such questions are answered only by revelation.

Evil and suffering do take a terrible toll in the world, and we certainly cannot give glib answers to cover every wrenching human situation. But, through the blessings of the Restoration, we can see things as they really were, are, and will be (see D&C 93:24; see also Jacob 4:13). We can then better walk the straight and narrow way, inspired and informed “by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). However, these added understandings provided by the Restoration clearly do not exempt us from either temptation or from suffering. There are no immunities, only variations.

Latter-day Saints also know

that God did not create man *ex nihilo*, out of nothing. The concept of an “out of nothing” creation confronts its adherents with a severe dilemma. One commentator wrote of human suffering and an “out of nothing” creation: “We cannot say that [God] would like to help but cannot: God is omnipotent. We cannot say that he would help if he only knew: God is omniscient. We cannot say that he is not responsible for the wickedness of others: God creates those others. Indeed an omnipotent, omniscient God [who creates all things absolutely—i.e., out of nothing] must be an accessory before (and during) the fact to every human misdeed; as well as being responsible for every non-moral defect in the universe.”⁶

Of course, God is not “responsible” for our human misdeeds! How vital, therefore, the “plain and precious” truths of the Restoration are in order to see things as they really are instead of being puzzled.

EMANCIPATING TRUTHS

Restoration correctives provide emancipating perspectives! The revelations, when “pressed down, and



DETAIL FROM CHRIST AND THE RICH YOUNG RULER, BY HEINRICH HOFMANN; STILL LIFE PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

May God bless us with a willingness to share the harvest basket of the Restoration, that as we have been spiritually nourished so may we nourish our neighbor.

shaken together,” emphasize that man is, at once, an intelligence or spirit coeternal—but certainly not coequal—with God (see Abraham 3:18). Thus, doctrinally, we are positioned very differently, because “God is neither the source nor the cause of either moral or natural evil.”⁷ God is thus the organizer of eternal intelligences, which can neither be created nor destroyed (see D&C 93:29). Furthermore, God will not coerce men since all intelligence is free to act for itself “in that sphere in which God has placed it. . . . Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man” (D&C 93:30–31).

In the Restoration, we further learn that, built into the existing structure of mortal life, “there is an opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11). This doctrine is more than just a minor clue to life. It is a major divine disclosure! As Brigham Young University professor David Paulsen has thoughtfully written: “Without moral righteousness, there is no happiness; without significant moral freedom, there is no moral righteousness; without an opposition (opposing possibilities to choose between), there is no significant moral freedom. Thus, happiness and opposition are essentially related.”⁸

When Restoration truths are thus “shaken together,” powerful understandings vital to daily life emerge.

It is my opinion, not Church doctrine, that one distant day it will even become more apparent than it now is that our loving Father is doing all even He possibly can do to help us!

The restored gospel of Jesus Christ is evidence of His help. As beneficiaries of Restoration blessings, we are recipients of “so much light and so much knowledge” (Alma 9:19) about the meaning and purpose of life, the character of the Father and the Son, and the work and glory of the plan of salvation (see Moses 1:39).

May God bless us with a willingness to share the harvest basket of the Restoration, that as we have been spiritually nourished so may we nourish our neighbor. □

From an address given at the Assembly Hall in Salt Lake City, Utah, on 3 February 1995.

NOTES

1. In *The Lion in Winter*, part 3 of the documentary MGM: *When the Lion Roars*, 1992, Turner Pictures, Inc., shown on PBS.
2. Robert Wright and George Forrest, lyrics from “Sands of Time,” *Kismet*.
3. *Deseret News*, 31 January 1872, 609.
4. *Deseret News*, 2 April 1873, 132.
5. *Daily Express*, London, England, 13 July 1953, 4.
6. Antony Flew, “Theology and Falsification,” in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, edited by Antony Flew and Alasdair Macintyre (1955), 107.
7. In Daniel H. Ludlow, editor, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 volumes (1992), 2:478.
8. Letter to author in author’s possession.

BUILDING FAMILY UNITY THROUGH TEMPLE AND FAMILY HISTORY WORK

The purpose of mortal families,” says Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “is to bring children into the world, to teach them what is right, and to prepare all family members for exaltation in eternal family relationships” (“Weightier Matters,” *Liahona*, March 2000, 16). Our families are strengthened as we become one in purpose with our Heavenly Father, seeking the exaltation of all family members—past, present, and future.

THE MISSION OF ELIJAH

In 1836 Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple. He came to “turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers” (Malachi 4:6; see also D&C 2) and to restore the keys of the sealing power, which enables families to be eternally bound together. Elijah’s coming has increased concern for family history work (see D&C 110:13–16).

Each of us can participate in some aspect of temple and family history work. The Holy Ghost will guide us as we prayerfully seek to know when and how to fulfill these responsibilities. We can begin by receiving our own temple ordinances and helping immediate family members receive

them. We can identify ancestors using our own information—together with family and other records. We can submit our ancestors’ names to the temple and, where possible, perform ordinances in their behalf. We can draw generations together by sharing family histories with our children and grandchildren. Those who follow us will be grateful if we keep a record of the important dates and experiences in our lives.

JOURNALS AND PERSONAL HISTORIES

Family bonds can even be strengthened with posterity yet to be born. Sometimes this bond develops as we keep a journal and write a personal history. Our words may have the power to fortify future generations when we make a record of God’s dealings in our own lives.

One sister writes: “At age 21 I was stricken with a mental illness that, I learned, would be a lifelong problem. Through priesthood blessings, I was promised I would be healed according to my faith. Maintaining faith became my greatest challenge. During a particularly troubling time, my mother gave me the personal history of my great-grandmother.

“As a young girl in Switzerland, she was afflicted with an incurable illness. As she lay ill, she read pamphlets about the priesthood and about men who could heal the sick as Jesus had done.”

After joining the Church, her great-grandmother prayed with faith to be healed. Following one of many priesthood blessings, she recorded: “I want to tell . . . all my grandchildren . . . that there are not words in any language to describe the feeling that came over me when I was healed. I really could feel it from the top of my head to my feet, and from that time on I was healed.”

Those words spoke powerfully to this sister. “My faith was strengthened,” she says, “and I knew in the Lord’s time I, too, would be healed.”

As we labor to forge eternal family links in these and other ways, our families will be blessed with a unifying power that will span generations and reach into eternity. □



Ana Lucrecia Morales

THE GIFT OF A POET

By Don L. Searle

*God gave to poets a gift,
to feel the essence of life,
she writes.*

She is a pizza-with-peppers-and-double-cheese kind of girl who enjoys studying in the patio swing or shopping for clothes. Yet she is also the kind of young woman who enjoys going to poetry readings, and she writes that God gave a gift to poets

*to feel the essence of life
and of things: the water,
the earth, the moon and the
morning.*

At first glance, Ana Lucrecia Morales is a lot like other 16-year-old Guatemalan girls. Yet her friends know she is different—in ways they don't always understand, but in ways they respect.

For one thing, even though she

has plenty of schoolwork, she looks forward to going to another class every evening after school. She calls it seminary. To most of her friends, seminary would be a place where priests or ministers study, not a place for a teenager. "Isn't it tedious?" they ask. "It must be boring," they say.

But not to Analú, as her friends call her. Her mother picks her up from school, along with her younger sister and brother, and takes them directly to their 6:00 P.M. seminary class. Analú tells her friends she likes seminary because she learns about Jesus Christ there. She also likes studying the scriptures; she won second place in her seminary class in scripture mastery.

Her class of about 15 meets in her ward building—the San Pedrito Ward, Guatemala City Guatemala Palmita Stake—and for at least that hour each day Analú is among friends who enjoy studying the scriptures too.

During the regular school day, Analú attends Colegio Vienna, a private secondary school run by Austrian educators. "I like it," Analú says. "I feel like I'm getting a good education, and I have a lot of friends there." No more than three or four of them, however, are Church members, and no members are in her classes.

It's not just her eagerness to go to seminary that makes Analú seem different to her friends who are not members of the Church.

She always says no to coffee. In a country where coffee production means jobs for many people, that's hard for some of her friends to understand. "Why is it a sin to drink coffee?" they ask.

"I tell them it isn't good for our bodies," she says. The question allows her to explain the Word of Wisdom.

Usually her friends respect her beliefs, but most of them don't agree with her about the Word of Wisdom and sometimes about other things as well. It's not easy when friends want her to do things she has been taught not to do, and she often prays for strength to stand up for her beliefs.

But in such situations, there is help. "Seminary helps me in many ways," she explains. "In meeting problems, seminary always helps me choose the right, and it's also very interesting to learn about the prophets and how the Lord has manifested Himself to them."

The way Analú responds to the

**Analú is grateful for the gospel,
which teaches her to develop and
share all of God's gifts.**





“EVERY GOOD GIFT”

While a member of the Seventy, Elder Robert D. Hales explained: “In Doctrine and Covenants 52:14–19, we are given a guide to follow so that our creative gifts can be used for righteous purposes. We are told that the gift or pattern of discernment is dependent upon prayer, a contrite spirit, obedience to the ordinances and commandments, meek and edifying language, no contention, humble acknowledgement of the Lord’s power, and our bringing forth fruits of praise and wisdom.

“Section 46, verse 10 also makes reference to our ‘minds,’ meaning our ability to study, learn, and develop our intelligence, gifts, and talents. We have the responsibility to improve ourselves.

“A friend of mine was asked, ‘Do you play the piano?’ He replied, ‘I don’t know, I haven’t tried yet.’ What a great lesson! How many talents we may have hidden that are waiting to emerge if we just try!

“Don’t forget, though, that developing our creative talents is not an easy task. Sometimes I catch myself rationalizing about my lack of talents by saying, ‘All have not every gift given unto them’ (D&C 46:11). For example, when we work closely with translators and interpreters, it’s easy to say to them, ‘How fortunate you are to have the gift of tongues.’ On one occasion the direct answer to me was, ‘My gift of tongues was received after thousands of hours of study and after overcoming many moments of failure and discouragement’” (“Every Good Gift,” *New Era*, August 1983, 6–7).

words of the Lord and His prophets may have something to do with what she wrote at the beginning of her poem:

*God gave to poets
a sixth sense,
to perceive the essence
of feeling . . .*

Of course, Analú spends time doing some of the same things all the other girls do. She likes getting together with friends to listen to music. Her favorite musical group does ballads and popular music. She also has a friend who is a talented pianist, and Analú enjoys listening to her friend play classical music.

She enjoys getting together with friends to go to movies. She admires one particular movie actor—but not for his looks. What does she like about him? He always portrays funny characters, but they are very real and truly care for others.

These characteristics say something about Analú and ultimately about the kind of family she would like to be part of someday. “I’d like my future children to have everything I’ve had thanks to the goodness of God,” she says. “I try very hard to live right because I want them to have a good example in me.”

Analú learned early how good Heavenly Father can be to His children. When she was a little girl, her father was very sick. After several surgeries, doctors had done all they

could, and there was little hope he would survive. But Analú’s mother united the family in prayer and urged them to pray individually as well. He recovered, to the amazement of his doctors, who said it was a miracle. Analú knew it was an



Analú (second from right) with her sister, Luz Andrea Carolina; her cousin Gabriela; and her brother, José Manuel.

answer to their prayers to Heavenly Father, and she learned that He would answer hers.

Such experiences and the things she has been taught live deep in her heart and are part of her being.

Maybe they’re like the things she talks about in another poem. She writes in her native Spanish about lines and words that are

*a personification of what
runs in our veins
and surprises strengths
unknown,
an indecipherable feeling
expressed in verses. □*



Scripture Study Suggestions

Studying the scriptures will bring you closer to Heavenly Father and help you become more like Him. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said the Book of Mormon brings great strength to the lives of those who diligently study it. “You will find greater power to resist temptation,” he promised. “You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path” (“The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, November 1986, 7).

If you struggle with finding time to study the scriptures or understanding them when you do read, here are some ideas to help you make your personal scripture study more meaningful:

- ✓ Make studying the scriptures a priority. You might not think you have the time, but if you *make* time, the other things you need to do will fall into place.

- ✓ Read every day for a set amount of time, preferably when you are most alert.

- ✓ Pray for understanding and guidance before you read, and invite the Holy Ghost to be with you.

- ✓ When you have finished reading, take a few minutes to ponder and pray about what you have read. Ask yourself if you really understood what you were reading.

- ✓ Keep a journal. Write down what the Spirit teaches you about the scriptures.

- ✓ Share what you learn with someone else. Teaching a concept and bearing your testimony of it are good ways to remember what you have learned.

- ✓ If possible, find a place where you can read quietly. Always try to read in a place free of distractions.

- ✓ Choose a topic that is relevant to your life at the moment, and search for scripture references on that topic.

- ✓ Consider the teachings found in the scriptures and how they apply to your life. Decide how you will live the principles you have learned.

- ✓ If your mind wanders, go back and read what you missed. Remember, it's not how much you read each day that matters—it's the quality of your studying that is important. □

We have come to earth from our premortal home to fulfill several important purposes, one of which is to receive a physical body. Bodies, of course, come in all shapes and sizes, but our physical appearance is not particularly important. What we do with the body we have been given is very important. The question we need to ask ourselves is whether our spirits will govern our bodies or whether our bodies will control our spirits.

The world would have us believe our true identity is nothing more

bodies are subject to the temptations of the world (see Moses 6:49).

We might liken our physical bodies to an automobile and our spirits to a driver. An automobile is a wonderful, powerful tool. If the driver is alert and sober and mature enough to drive carefully, he or she is in control and the automobile can take him or her to the desired destination. But if the driver is asleep or drunk, is not paying attention, or is perhaps too immature to drive safely, then the automobile is in control, and it can cause destruction and

All the help that comes to us from the Lord to aid us in this struggle will come to us through the spirit that dwells within this mortal body. So these two mighty forces are operating upon us through these two channels.

“How is the battle going with you? . . . You never can tell how the battle is going to go unless you are taking good care of the spirit. We know that unless one takes proper food and exercise, speaking physically, there is no growth. If you would have a strong spirit which has dominance

T H E M O R T A L C O N F L I C T

than some combination of the passions, instincts, and experiences that come with the body. But our bodies are inhabited by our spirits, and even though our spirits are not perfect, they come to earth innocent and yearn initially for things that are good and right and pure (see D&C 29:46–47; 93:38). Our spirits come from the presence of God, but because of the veil placed on our minds as we enter mortality, we cannot remember our premortal life. Yet our spirit is attracted to spiritual things. This goodness places our spirits in conflict with our bodies, for our

heartache to both the driver and anyone else who may be in the car’s path.

Elder Melvin J. Ballard (1873–1939) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that the greatest conflict we will ever face will be with ourselves. He explained: “All the assaults that the enemy of our souls will make to capture us will be through the flesh, because it is made up of the unredeemed earth, and he has power over the elements of the earth. The approach he makes to us will be through the lusts, the appetites, the ambitions of the flesh.

over the body, you must see to it that your spirit receives spiritual food and spiritual exercise.

“Where do you get spiritual food? . . . Once a week members of the Church are invited to go to the sacrament table where they eat and drink the emblems of the broken body and the spilt blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, blessed to their spirits—not to their physical bodies, for he who eats and drinks worthily, eats and drinks spiritual life. We are also charged to seek the Lord daily in prayer, secret prayer and family prayer. What happens then? We

close our eyes and shut out the physical world, we open the windows of our souls and draw unto ourselves spiritual blessings, spiritual powers. And there flows into our spiritual life this strength. So these and other opportunities are offered for spiritual food, and spiritual exercise comes through service in behalf of our fellowmen.

“The man or woman who is taking neither spiritual food nor spiritual exercise will presently become

a spiritual weakling, and the flesh will be master. Whoever therefore is obtaining both spiritual food and exercise will be in control over this body and will keep it subject unto the will of God.

“. . . You have all heard the adage that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link. It will break at its weak point. Generally we will observe that our weak link is in the flesh. The devil knows the weak link, and when he undertakes to capture a soul he will strike at the weak point. There

may be strength elsewhere, but he never attacks us where we are strong. He attacks where we are weak. . . .

“It is not bodies, it is immortal spirits that the devil wants. And he tries to capture them through the body, for the body can enslave the spirit, but the spirit can keep the body a servant and be its master” (“Conflict Will Come between Forces of Good and Evil; Every Soul Must Choose to Uphold One Side or Other” [address delivered in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, 29 April 1928]; see *Tambuli*, September 1984, 30–41). □



“AND HE GAVE SOME,

The pattern of apostolic leadership that governed the early Church after the Savior’s Ascension continues in the Church today.

In the early Church, the Savior set the pattern for Church leadership: “He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:11). In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke described the vital role Apostles had in guiding the Church anciently. This model of apostolic leadership continues in the Church today and is further confirmed by revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and by modern prophets. The striking parallels between the role of Apostles in New Testament times

and the role of Apostles today testify of the continuing validity of this sacred office.

APOSTLES ARE CHOSEN AND CALLED OF GOD

The word *Apostle* is derived from a Greek word meaning “one sent forth” (see Bible Dictionary, “Apostle,” 612). Such an appointment requires a divine commission and priesthood authority. Apostles have the special responsibility to take the gospel to all the peoples of the earth and the unique commission



IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME, BY WALTER RANE

APOSTLES”

By Edward J. Brandt

to assist in overseeing the Church. The word *Apostle* was not applied to the early patriarchs and prophets of God who led His people through their ages; rather, it was restricted for those called as special witnesses of the name of Jesus Christ, His Atonement, and His Resurrection. It pertains likewise to those who carry the same responsibilities in the dispensation of the fulness of times.

The book of Acts affirms that the Apostles were to continue guiding the Church. After the Ascension of Christ, He directed the continuing

labors of the Apostles “through the Holy Ghost” (Acts 1:2). The Apostles had been prepared and taught by the Lord to enable them to fulfill their calling and ministry.

In this dispensation the Lord again called Apostles, beginning with “Joseph Smith, Jun., who was called of God, and ordained an apostle of Jesus Christ, . . . and . . . Oliver Cowdery, who was also called of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ, . . . and ordained under his hand” (D&C 20:2–3). The reestablishment of a Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for

this dispensation took place on 14 February 1835, when they were chosen and announced (see *History of the Church*, 2:181–89).

APOSTLES ARE COMMISSIONED TO TEACH ALL NATIONS

A primary role of the Apostles has always been to teach the gospel: “And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach” (Mark 3:14). While their early ministry was limited to the house of Israel (see Matthew 10:5–6; 15:24), the Savior





“All incumbent members of the Quorum of the First Presidency and of the Council of the Twelve have been recipients of the keys, rights, and authority pertaining to the holy apostleship. . . . In this authority reside the powers of governance of the Church and kingdom of God in the earth.”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley

later sent them to “teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19).

The book of Acts shows how the Apostles fulfilled their commission. On the day of Pentecost, the spiritual endowment given to Peter and the other Apostles enabled them to teach even the foreign speakers in their midst, and “every man heard them speak in his own language” (Acts 2:6).

Later, Peter, the prophet-leader of the early Twelve, was inspired to extend the work to the Gentiles: “In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (see Acts 10:34–35). Some at first challenged the new direction, but the Spirit manifested the need for the conversion of those not of Israel (see Acts 11:1–18). The book of Acts describes some of the missionary travels of the Twelve and concludes with the far-reaching missions of the Apostle Paul.

Similarly, under the direction of

the First Presidency of the Church, the Apostles called in our dispensation oversee carrying the gospel to the nations. “Whithersoever they [the First Presidency] shall send you, go ye, and I will be with you; in whatsoever place ye shall proclaim my name an effectual door shall be opened unto you” (D&C 112:19). The Twelve are further given the responsibility to oversee others who may be sent to assist them in fulfilling this commission (see D&C 84:62; 107:35; 112:21).

APOSTLES HOLD THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

Another apostolic responsibility in both ancient and modern times pertains to the “keys of the kingdom,” or the priesthood authority to preside over and direct the Church of Jesus Christ. The Savior said to the early Apostles, with Peter as the presiding head, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).

To the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in this dispensation, the Lord declared that He had sent Peter, James, and John, “by whom I have ordained you and confirmed

We sustain the Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators.



you to be apostles, and especial witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry and of the same things which I revealed unto them;

“Unto whom I have committed the keys of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times, in the which I will gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth” (D&C 27:12–13; see also D&C 112:30–32).

President Gordon B. Hinckley has provided instruction on this matter: “Each man who is ordained an Apostle and sustained a member of the Council of the Twelve is sustained as a prophet, seer, and revelator. . . . Therefore, all incumbent members of the Quorum of the First Presidency and of the Council of the Twelve have been recipients of the keys, rights, and authority pertaining to the holy apostleship. . . . In this authority reside the powers of governance of the Church and kingdom of God in the earth. There is order in the exercise of that authority. It is specifically set forth in the revelations of the Lord. It is known to all of the Brethren and is observed by all.”¹

APOSTLES TEACH THE DOCTRINES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

Apostles have a special blessing in connection with their teaching the people. We read, “God hath set

some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets” (1 Corinthians 12:28). In another letter from the Apostle Paul, these Church officials were likened unto a building with a “foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20). Likewise in this dispensation, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets . . .” (Articles of Faith 1:6).

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, cites the informative teaching of President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961), a Counselor in the First Presidency: “Some of the General Authorities [the Apostles] have had assigned to them a special calling; they possess a special gift; they are sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators, which gives them a special spiritual endowment in connection with their teaching of this people. They have the right, the power, and the authority to declare the mind and will of God to his people, subject to the over-all power and authority of the President of the Church. Others of the General Authorities are not given this special spiritual endowment.’ The resulting limitation ‘applies to every other officer and member of the Church, for none of them is

spiritually endowed as a prophet, seer, and revelator.’”²

In this manner, God has “set up safeguards to protect . . . members from being tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine and to preserve them from the sleight of men who, with cunning craftiness, lie in wait to deceive. (See Eph. 4:14.) Those safeguards, according to Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians, rested primarily in the persons of the apostles and prophets whom God placed at the head of the Church for that specific purpose.”³

The Lord has given the following warning concerning those who are to consider the message of the Apostles: “The day cometh that they who will not hear the voice of the Lord, neither the voice of his servants, neither give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles, should be cut off from among the people” (D&C 1:14). Therefore, because of the special endowment associated with their teaching, the Lord has said that all who teach within the Church or as missionaries should use the instruction of the Apostles for their measure. The scriptures indicate that teachers should say “none other things than that which the prophets and apostles have written,” even “that which they have seen and heard and most assuredly believe” (D&C 52:9, 36).



“The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, called and ordained to hold the keys of the priesthood, have the authority and responsibility to govern the Church, to administer its ordinances, to teach its doctrine, and to establish and maintain its practices.”

—President Howard W. Hunter

APOSTLES ARE TO BUILD UP AND SET IN ORDER THE CHURCH

In the New Testament era of the Church, as new units were formed and grew, the Apostles went about “confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and . . . ordained them elders in every church” (Acts 14:22–23). They communicated direction and counsel from the Church leaders. The ancient scripture records, “They delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles . . . , and so were the churches established in the faith” (Acts 16:4–5).

Similarly, Apostles today “officiate in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Presidency of the Church, . . . to build up the church,

and regulate all the affairs of the same in all nations” (D&C 107:33). Likewise, “it is the duty of the Twelve . . . to ordain and set in order all the other officers of the church” (D&C 107:58). President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) has provided instruction concerning this aspect of an Apostle’s service:

“The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, called and ordained to hold the keys of the priesthood, have the authority and responsibility to govern the Church, to administer its ordinances, to teach its doctrine, and to establish and maintain its practices. . . .

“ . . . The governance of the Church and the exercise of the prophetic gifts will always be vested in those apostolic



authorities who hold and exercise all of the keys of the priesthood.”⁴

THE SENIOR APOSTLE IS THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH

As in former days, the senior Apostle presides over the Church and has the responsibility to announce new doctrine or changes. With the death of Judas Iscariot (see Matthew 27:3–5), a vacancy existed in the Quorum of the Twelve. Peter, as President of the Church,⁵ directed the calling of a new Apostle, Matthias, who was “ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection” (Acts 1:22; see also Acts 1:15–16, 21–26).

In another example, Peter was given a great revelation expanding the ministry of the Apostles from the house of Israel to all the world (see Acts 10:9–16). As he came to understand the revelation, he communicated it to the Church:

“Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

“But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34–35).

After the announcement and implementation of the revelation, some in the Church contended against the new doctrine, adhering

Apostles “officiate in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Presidency of the Church.”

firmly to the Mosaic law. Peter corrected their false teaching and testified of the divine direction he had received concerning the matter (see Acts 11:1–18). In time there grew some additional disagreements as to how this revelation was to be applied to the converts of the early Church (see Acts 15:1–5). The matter was considered in council and resolved under Peter’s leadership. A letter clarifying the earlier revelation and its application was the means used to communicate the decision to the whole Church (see Acts 15:6–31).

As one author explained:

“There is no doubt that Peter and the other Brethren knew that the law of Moses was fulfilled. . . . Yet still there was that conflict between the doctrine of the Church and Jewish culture. The long-standing cultural tradition persisted among many Jewish members for years, even after the doctrinal question was settled.

“In like manner today, there may be questions on which the doctrinal foundation is clear but on which tradition or custom are so strong that the Brethren are impressed not to take a firmer stand, trusting, as did Church leaders in New Testament times, that if the basic revealed principles are known, the Holy Ghost will eventually lead the adherents to forsake their tradition, or academic popularity, or peer

pressure in favor of the word of God.

“The resolution of the problem reported in the book of Acts gives our present generation an informative model as to how both Church members and those of different faiths may react when revelation confronts tradition and long-standing custom. Only living prophets could correctly handle the situation then. Only living prophets can do so in our day.”⁶

In our own time the pattern of resolving doctrinal issues continues. President J. Reuben Clark Jr. taught that among those of the Twelve and the First Presidency, “only the President of the Church, the Presiding High Priest, is sustained as Prophet, Seer, and Revelator for the Church, and he alone has the right to receive revelations for the Church, either new or amendatory, or to give authoritative interpretations of scriptures that shall be binding on the Church, or change in any way the existing doctrines of the Church.”⁷

When there are cases “of difficulty respecting doctrine or principle, . . . the president may inquire and obtain the mind of the Lord by revelation” (D&C 102:23). When the First Presidency of the Church and the Twelve Apostles meet in council, they consider “the most important business of the church” (D&C 107:78), and this body is spoken of in the revelations as “the highest council of the church of God, and . . . [those who make]



“As one of those called as special witnesses, I add my testimony to those of fellow Apostles:

He lives! He lives with resurrected body. There is no truth or fact of which I am more assured, or know better by personal experience, than the truth of the literal resurrection of our Lord.”

—President Ezra Taft Benson

a final decision upon controversies in spiritual matters” (D&C 107:80).

APOSTLES ARE SPECIAL WITNESSES OF JESUS CHRIST

One of the most important responsibilities of an ordained Apostle is to testify of the divinity of Jesus Christ, that He is indeed literally the Son of God. We see this pattern in the book of Acts when Peter bore powerful testimony that Jesus Christ was “the Holy One,” “the Prince of life,” even “Christ” (see Acts 3:12–18). He taught that Jesus was the “prophet” whom Moses had prophesied that we should listen to—the one foretold by all the prophets, even the Son of God sent “to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (see Acts 3:19–26; see also Deuteronomy 18:15–19; 1 Nephi 22:20–22). Peter, John, Barnabas, Paul, and the other Apostles each

were special witnesses of Christ in their day.

Of Apostles in the latter days, the Redeemer said they were to be “special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world—thus differing from other officers” (D&C 107:23). Concerning this responsibility, President Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“They were called because the Lord wanted them in this office as men who have a witness of his divinity, and whose voices have been and will be raised in testimony of his reality.

“Each is a man of faith. After they are ordained to the holy apostleship and are set apart as members of the Council of the Twelve, they will be expected to devote themselves primarily to the work of the ministry. They will place first in their lives, above all other considerations, the responsibility to stand as special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world.”⁸



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK SCOTT

In addition, President Howard W. Hunter testified: "I humbly testify of my privilege to bear the holy apostleship and to work daily with a modern Quorum of Twelve Apostles who are disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to go forth as 'special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world.' (D&C 107:23.) And so have the Apostles always testified."⁹

APOSTLES ARE SPECIAL WITNESSES OF THE SAVIOR'S RESURRECTION

The Apostles also serve as special witnesses of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. After His Resurrection, Jesus was seen first by Mary Magdalene (see Mark 16:9), and "he was seen of Cephas [Peter, the head of the Church], then of the twelve" (1 Corinthians 15:5), and by others (see 1 Corinthians 15:6–9).

One of the early appearances to the Twelve was on "the first day of the week, when the doors were shut . . . , [and] Jesus . . . stood in the midst" of them (John 20:19; see also Luke 24:36). These early Apostles felt the Savior's resurrected body. He ate with them, instructed them, and blessed them (see Luke 24:37–48; John 20:20–23).

Eight days later, the Twelve had a

Since 12 March 1995 President Gordon B. Hinckley has served as the senior Apostle and the President of the Church.

similar experience, this time including Thomas, who had been absent before (see John 20:24–29). Other appearances to the Twelve occurred until His eventual Ascension (see Matthew 28:16–18; Mark 16:12–13; Luke 24:13–32; John 21:1–15).

In the book of Acts, Peter affirmed the role of the Apostles in bearing witness of the Savior's ministry:

"We are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

"Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

"Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead" (Acts 10:39–41; see also Acts 3:15).

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) testified of this unique responsibility belonging to all who are Apostles: "As one of those called as special witnesses, I add my testimony to those of fellow Apostles: He lives! He lives with resurrected body. There is no truth or fact of which I am more assured, or know better by personal experience, than the truth of the literal resurrection of our Lord."¹⁰

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the book of Acts demonstrates something of the breadth and power of the Apostles' ministry. The original Twelve and four

others mentioned by name served in that earlier dispensation of the gospel.

In our dispensation, 92 men have served as members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. They labor under the direction of the First Presidency to fulfill the responsibilities of this sacred office and calling. As these noble leaders in the vineyard fulfill their apostolic service, the Savior refers to them as His friends: "And as I said unto mine apostles, even so I say unto you, for you are mine apostles, even God's high priests; ye are they whom my Father hath given me; ye are my friends" (D&C 84:63). □

Edward J. Brandt is the manager of the Evaluation Division of the Church's Correlation Department.

NOTES

1. "God Is at the Helm," *Ensign*, May 1994, 54, 59.
2. Quoted in "The Twelve Apostles," *Ensign*, November 1996, 6.
3. Mark E. Petersen, "Salvation Comes through the Church," *Ensign*, July 1973, 108.
4. "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises," *Ensign*, November 1994, 7.
5. See Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Lengthening Shadow of Peter," *Ensign*, September 1975, 30–35.
6. Robert J. Matthews, "A Crisis, a Council, and Inspired Leadership," *Ensign*, October 1995, 59.
7. Quoted in *Ensign*, November 1996, 6.
8. "Special Witnesses for Christ," *Ensign*, May 1984, 49.
9. "An Apostle's Witness of the Resurrection," *Ensign*, May 1986, 17.
10. "Five Marks of the Divinity of Jesus Christ," *New Era*, December 1980, 48.



The Shape of Character: Classic Insights from President David O. McKay

David O. McKay (1873–1970) served as Church President for 19 years. He often spoke about developing character. Following are some classic insights from the ninth President of the Church.

“AS A MAN THINKETH”

“No principle of life was more constantly emphasized by the Great Teacher than the necessity of right thinking. To Him, the man was not what he appeared to be outwardly, nor what he professed to be by his words: what the man *thought* determined in all cases what the man *was*. No teacher emphasized more strongly than He the truth that ‘as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he’ [see Proverbs 23:7]. . . .

“. . . Contentment, complacency, peace—all that makes life worth living—have their source in the mind of the individual. From the same source spring unrest, turbulency, misery—everything that leads to dissolution and death. . . .

“. . . It is well for [every teacher and officer in the Church] to ascertain ‘what he is thinking about when he doesn’t have to think,’ for ‘what he thinketh in his heart, so is he’” (“As a Man Thinketh . . .,” *Instructor*, September 1958, 257–58).

WE RADIATE WHAT WE ARE

“There is another responsibility correlated and even co-existent with . . . agency, which is too infrequently emphasized, and that is the effect not only of a person’s actions, but also of his thoughts. Man radiates what he is, and that radiation affects to a greater or less[er] degree every person who comes within that radiation” (“Free Agency . . . the Gift Divine,” *Improvement Era*, February 1962, 87).

THE APPROVAL OF CONSCIENCE

“Thoughts mold your features. Thoughts lift your soul heavenward or drag you toward hell. . . . As nothing reveals character like the company we like and keep, so nothing foretells futurity like the thoughts over which we brood. . . .

“To have the approval of your conscience when you are alone with your thoughts is like being in the company of true and loving friends. To merit your own self-respect gives strength of character. Conscience is the link that binds your soul to the spirit of God” (“Those Sculptors Called Thoughts and Ideals,” *Improvement Era*, July 1960, 495).

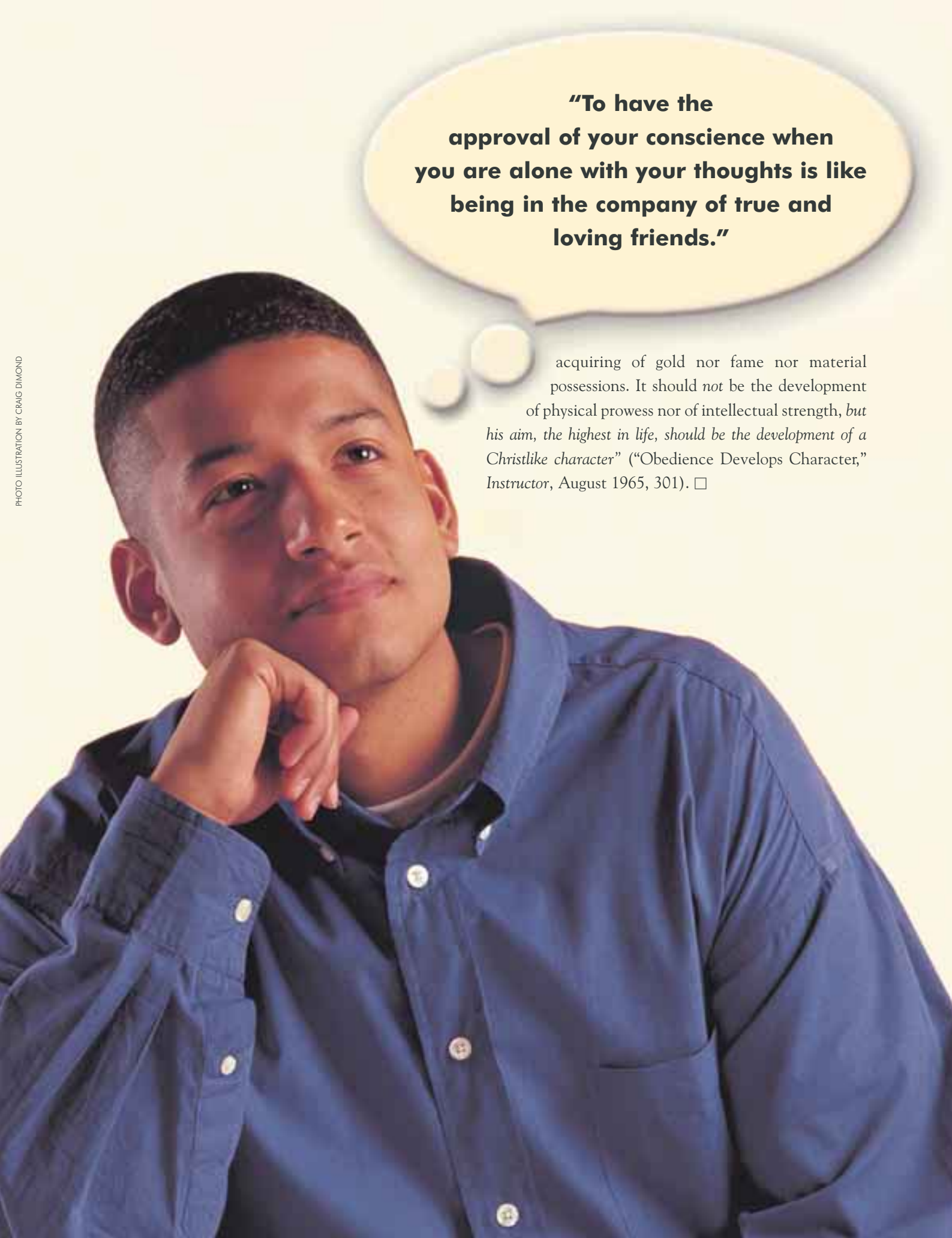
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GRAND CHARACTER

“Day by day, hour by hour, man builds the character that will determine his place and standing among his associates throughout the ages. . . .

“. . . More important than riches, more enduring than fame, more precious than happiness is the possession of a noble character. Truly it has been said that the grand aim of man’s creation is the development of a grand character, and grand character is by its very nature the product of a probationary discipline” (“Man’s Soul Is As Endless As Time,” *Instructor*, January 1960, 1–2).

A CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER

“What is the crowning glory of man in this earth so far as his individual achievement is concerned? It is *character—character developed through obedience to the laws of life as revealed through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who came that we might have life and have it more abundantly*. Man’s chief concern in life should not be the



“To have the approval of your conscience when you are alone with your thoughts is like being in the company of true and loving friends.”

acquiring of gold nor fame nor material possessions. It should *not* be the development of physical prowess nor of intellectual strength, *but his aim, the highest in life, should be the development of a Christlike character*” (“Obedience Develops Character,” *Instructor*, August 1965, 301). □

The Price of Discipleship

President Gordon B. Hinckley observes that “the price of discipleship is personal courage” (see this issue, page 2). The courage he speaks of is the moral courage it takes to stand up for what we believe, to follow God’s counsel, and to keep His commandments even if those around us do not. 🕊️ Courage is required of Christ’s disciples in other ways as well. It takes courage to turn the other cheek when someone lashes out in anger. Courage is often required in following the Spirit’s

promptings. And as we face personal trials, we must often draw on courage to persevere in reaching righteous goals. 🕊️ The experiences described here demonstrate the courage that characterizes the Lord’s disciples. They have learned, as President Hinckley has said, to “rejoice in the knowledge that although we are to stand with courage as we travel through mortality and even through our trials, God will not leave us without His guidance and sustaining power” (see this issue, page 6).



I Needed a Blessing

By Brandon J. Miller

It was the rainy season in the Philippines and had been raining all day. Rain often brought unwanted creatures into our house—usually spiders, rats, and such.

As my companion and I arrived home after a day of proselyting, we noticed a light on at our neighbors’ house and we thought we would visit them. We decided to stop at our house and pick up some photographs of our families to show them.

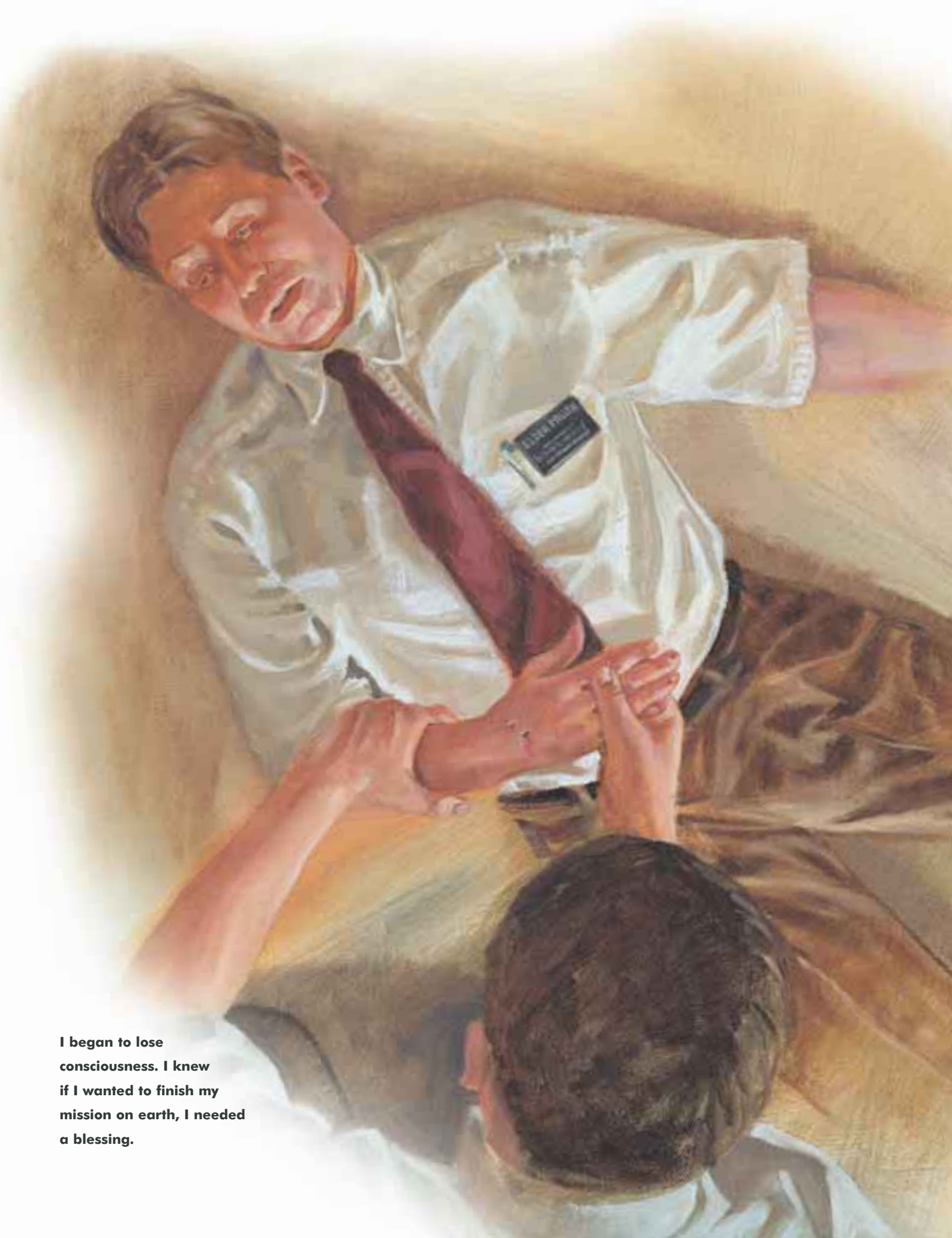
We kept the pictures on the bottom shelf between our beds. As I reached for mine, I suddenly felt a pain in my right hand. Looking down, I saw that a snake had just bitten me.

I called to my companion, Elder Regis, and he ran to see what the problem was. I showed him the blood on my hand and said I’d been bitten by a snake. A neighbor ran in because

of the commotion and helped us look for the snake. We found it when it struck from under the bed at a board Elder Regis was holding. The neighbor cried out, “That’s a Philippine cobra!”

Elder Regis killed the snake. I realized I was getting dizzy, so we rushed to Bishop Rotor’s house because he had some experience treating snakebites. He hurriedly began to do what he could to help me.

My chest was becoming heavy, and it was hard to breathe. A darkness



**I began to lose
consciousness. I knew
if I wanted to finish my
mission on earth, I needed
a blessing.**

seemed to cloud my thoughts, and I began to lose consciousness. Then I heard a voice say, “If you want to finish your mission on earth, you need a blessing.”

I stayed conscious long enough to say, “Will you give me a blessing?”

The bishop answered, “Yes, just let me finish this first.” It was hard for me to stay alert, but I heard the voice persist, “You need a blessing now. You cannot wait.” This time I said in a commanding voice, “Give me a blessing!”

I don’t remember the words of the blessing my companion and Bishop Rotor gave me. But I put all my trust in the Lord and His priesthood. During the prayer I began to come to my senses, and I vomited repeatedly. As I heard the final words of the blessing, the vomiting stopped. I was aware of my surroundings and felt a warm feeling of comfort and love fill my body. I knew that my Father in Heaven loved me and I would be OK.

My zone leader, Elder Howarth, brought to the bishop’s home a doctor who was investigating the Church. By this time about two hours had passed. We left for a hospital located about an hour away from where I was serving.

On the way the doctor asked me to tell him what had happened. Elder Howarth said, “Doctor, shouldn’t we

speed up?” The doctor’s answer was, “Why? He should already be dead. He is a lucky man.” The Philippine cobra is the deadliest snake in the Philippines.

If people say God is not a God of miracles anymore, they don’t understand this gospel or His love for us, His children. I know my life was spared and I suffered no lasting effects because of the power of God’s word: “And by the power of his word did they cause prisons to tumble to the earth,” wrote Moroni, “yea, even the fiery furnace could not harm them, neither wild beasts nor poisonous serpents, because of the power of his word” (Mormon 8:24).

Brandon J. Miller is a member of the Iona Second Ward, Iona Idaho Stake.

A Break in the Clouds

By Ana Lima Braxton

The air was stifflingly hot, and birds filled the blue Portuguese sky. Nearby, some of my nephews were playing in the river, plunging into the water to escape the heat.

I wished I could escape my troubles so easily. I had recently decided to become active again in the Church. Through the Holy Ghost, the Lord had confirmed my decision, but my family and friends didn’t understand. They had criticized and abandoned me, and I felt utterly alone. A request to watch my sister’s

boys swim had offered some needed moments of peace in what seemed a constant battle against forces intent on keeping me from the truth.

I had brought my Book of Mormon with me, and while my nephews splashed in the river, I sat under a tree and read. Tears started to flow as I thought of those I loved who told me I was making a mistake. I was so sure I was doing the Father’s will.

Suddenly it occurred to me that I could no longer hear my nephews. I looked toward the river, but they weren’t there. Concern, bordering on panic, flooded my heart.

And then I heard a young voice calling out my name. I turned to see my nephews standing behind me, smiling, cheeks as radiant as the light of the sun. The youngest, about five years old, was hiding something behind his back—an arrangement of multicolored flowers he and his brothers had picked from the nearby field. He presented them to me in a voice that sounded like music to my ears.

Tears sprang again to my eyes. But this time they were tears of happiness. As I embraced my nephews, I lifted my face to the sky and saw rays of sunlight shining through a break in the clouds. A great peace filled my heart. Because of this small, simple gesture—made with love—I knew

I turned to see my nephews standing behind me, smiling, cheeks as radiant as the light of the sun.

I was not alone. Even though they did not understand my decision, my nephews—and all my family members—still loved me. But more important, Heavenly Father knew of my trials and was there to sustain me with His infinite love and concern.

Ana Lima Braxton is a member of the Signal Mountain Branch, Chattanooga Tennessee Stake.

New Dreams for Old

By María Patricia Rojas V.

After finishing my studies in technical administration, I worked with a young executive who later became my husband. What a marvelous time of my life it was! But one month after our wedding, as my husband and I were traveling from Bogotá, Colombia, where we lived, to visit my parents in Duitama, we were involved in an automobile accident. The accident took my husband's life and left me with amnesia. I couldn't remember anything of the previous six years, couldn't walk, and couldn't move my left arm.

After months of physical therapy, I was finally able to walk again and move my arm somewhat. Gradually, my memory returned to the point that six years after the accident I could recall the events of my life except for two years: the one preceding the accident and the one following it. Still, my previous capabilities were much

diminished. I had trouble converting my thoughts into words, and I found it difficult to repeat something after hearing it. Because I easily forgot details, some people took advantage of my lapses.

Eventually, the doctors felt they had done all they could. I tried to appear happy and enthusiastic, but I often felt frustrated and angry. What was I to do with my life?

When I was at my lowest point, I read in the scriptures where the Lord promises that we will not be tried above that which we can bear (see 1 Corinthians 10:13; D&C 64:20). I prayed for a testimony of this promise.

I finally returned to the company where I had worked before the accident. Since I could not handle my

old job, I worked at less demanding assignments—but even these tasks proved difficult. Nevertheless, I didn't give up. I fought to complete my six-month contract. As I did, a marvelous feeling of hope illuminated my spirit, inspiring me to keep trying to improve my capabilities.

By staying close to the Lord, I re-established confidence in myself and could feel the influence of the Holy Ghost in my life. This influence soon led me to consider serving a mission. I know some people thought my desire foolish, but when I spoke with the branch president, he gave me the courage I needed. To prepare myself, I decided to read the Book of Mormon in its entirety—something I had not yet accomplished in my 12 years as a member.



However, my poor memory posed a real challenge. After starting with 1 Nephi at least 10 times and not being able to remember a thing I had read, I knew I needed a different approach. I prayed to find a solution, and soon a method entered my mind: I would write a summary of each chapter as I read it.

I bought a notebook and read the first chapter of 1 Nephi. Since I had only a vague idea of what I had just read, I read the chapter again. Only then was I able to summarize in my notebook the main ideas in that chapter.

Prayerfully, I moved on. After completing 1 Nephi, I found I no longer had to read each chapter twice; once was enough to write a good summary. I read the entire Book of Mormon this way. When I finished, I was left with a strong spiritual witness that the book is true, and I could also testify that the Lord strengthens us if we turn to Him.

I next completed the missionary health form, and I answered each question honestly, even though the answers could frustrate my desire to be a missionary. How great was my joy when I received a call to serve in the Colombia Cali Mission! There I discovered the truth of another of the Lord's promises, found in 1 Nephi 3:7: "The Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men,

save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them."

After I returned from my mission, I came to live with my parents on a farm where we grow products to sell. I have also developed a talent for knitting, which allows me to earn money and leaves me time for spiritual growth. I live a happy and productive life.

Of course, I would have preferred not to have had the accident, but I recognize the tremendous growth I have experienced because of it. I've learned that we may lose our dreams and hopes, even our loved ones, and our talents, riches, and strength might disappear—but the Lord will always support us. He gives us new dreams to replace those we have lost. In spite of all the difficulties we encounter, the Lord can help us move forward. He compensates—and He always keeps His promises.

María Patricia Rojas V. is a member of the Barbosa Branch, Duitama Colombia District.

A Tough Cowboy

By Allan L. Noble

Everyone knew that Dallas Stock, a rodeo cowboy, was tough. What they didn't know was how that toughness would be tested.

For some years Dallas had not been active in the Church, but

through the loving influence of his wife, Ginny, and their five children, along with the inspired efforts of ward leaders and friends, Dallas eventually had a change of heart. As his bishop, I rejoiced to see him progress to the point that he wanted to take his family to the temple. He prepared himself, and the family set a date to go to the house of the Lord.

One week before that date, Dallas was working on the stake welfare ranch, loading bulls into trucks. A temperamental bull was not cooperating, and to protect himself, Dallas jumped behind a gate. But as the bull hit the gate, it swung around, and the bull smashed Dallas between the gate and a fence. His arm and several ribs were broken, and he was badly bruised.

That evening I visited Dallas. He was in severe pain, with his arm in a cast and his ribs taped. I suggested that perhaps the temple trip should be postponed. His response was, "Bishop, I am going to the temple next Wednesday."

No one expected to see Dallas at church on Sunday. But he was there, fulfilling his calling by conducting Sunday School. It was a painful ordeal for him, but his devotion was inspiring to ward members.

On Wednesday Dallas, Ginny, their children, and many family and

ward members attended the temple as planned. With a son on one side and a son-in-law on the other, Dallas went through the endowment session. Each time he moved, the ward members could almost feel the pain they imagined Dallas must be suffering.

After Ginny and Dallas were sealed to each other and to their children in the sealing room, the

ward members, with tears in their eyes, lined up to congratulate them. I started to hug Dallas but stopped and said, "I don't want to hurt you."

"Bishop," Dallas replied, "I don't hurt at all. I can tell you I haven't hurt all day."

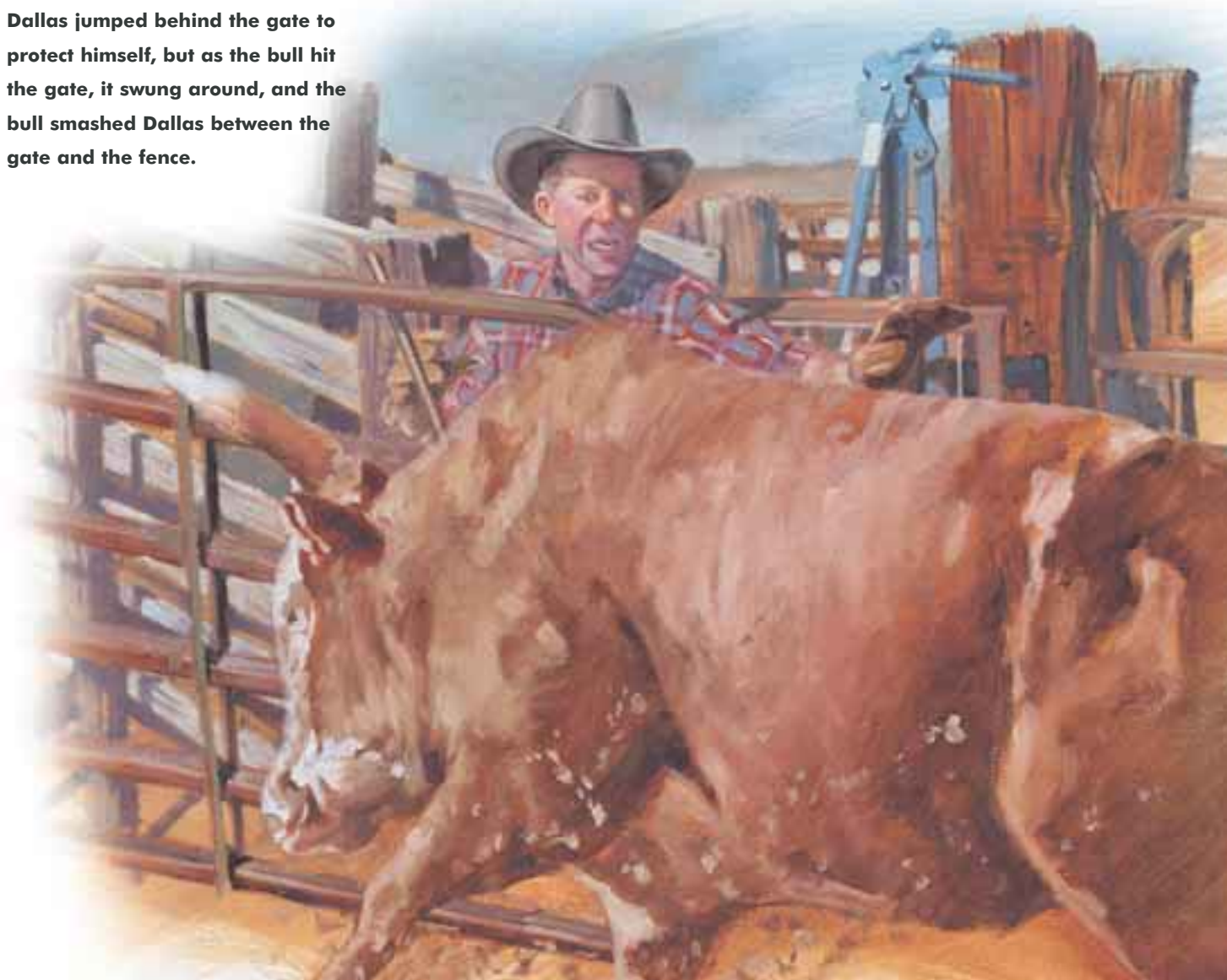
"It looked so painful," I said.

"It was hard to get up and down," he explained, "but it hasn't hurt at all."

As I left the temple I was overcome by everything that had taken place. How grateful I was that Dallas had been blessed as he made every effort to get to the temple with his family. That day we witnessed not the strength of a cowboy but the strength of a spiritual giant. □

Allan L. Noble is a member of the Garden Lakes Ward, Phoenix Arizona West Maricopa Stake.

Dallas jumped behind the gate to protect himself, but as the bull hit the gate, it swung around, and the bull smashed Dallas between the gate and the fence.



The Friend

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



"WHO IS THIS



PROPHET?"

By Jane McBride Choate

A true story

Jenelle heard her best friend, Michelle, invite their friend Rebecca to her birthday party on Sunday. It was going to be a swimming party.

Michelle had already invited Jenelle, and Jenelle had not given her an answer yet. But she knew she wouldn't be going to the party.

Michelle and Jenelle had been friends since they were six years old. But after Jenelle's family had become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints nine months ago, things had changed between them. Becoming a Church member hadn't changed what Jenelle felt for her friend, but Michelle was having a hard time understanding why Jenelle was different than before.

After school, Jenelle trudged home more discouraged than ever. Everyone else Michelle had invited to her party would be there. *Mom will know what I can do,* Jenelle thought. *I always feel better after talking things over with her.*

At home, she told her mother the whole story. "What am I going to do?" she asked.

Mom put her arm around Jenelle's shoulders. "You have to decide what's more important to you—going to your friend's party or obeying the commandments," she said.

Jenelle sighed. She knew what she *should* do. That didn't make it any easier, though. She didn't want to hurt her friend's feelings, and she wanted to go to the party. But she couldn't break one of the commandments, especially after hearing the prophet speak in general conference about the importance of keeping the Sabbath day holy.

She knew what she had to do. After school the next day, she hurried home and wrapped the present she had made for Michelle. Then she walked to her friend's house.



“I made you something special for your birthday,” she said. “I’m sorry I can’t come to your birthday party. It’s because it’s on Sunday.”

Michelle unwrapped the present and held it up. “A birdhouse!” she said. “This is great! You made this yourself?”

Jenelle nodded. “At Primary achievement day.” She told Michelle about Primary and the achievement days for girls her age.

“What’s the big deal about going swimming on Sunday?” Michelle asked after thanking Jenelle for the gift. “We’ll be going in the afternoon, after your church is over.”

“The prophet said we need to keep the Sabbath day holy,” Jenelle explained.

“What does that mean?” Michelle asked.

“It means we don’t shop on Sunday or go swimming or to ball games—stuff like that.”

“What *do* you do?” Michelle wondered.

“We go to church, spend time with our families, listen to music, read the scriptures.” Jenelle smiled, remembering last Sunday. “Sometimes we take a nap.”

Michelle frowned. “Who is this prophet? Why do you have to do what he says?”

“He’s the President of the Church,” Jenelle explained.

“So he’s like the boss?”

Jenelle smiled again. She’d never heard the prophet described as a boss, but she supposed it made sense to people who weren’t members of the Church.

“What makes the prophet so special?” Michelle asked.

“He teaches us things Heavenly Father wants us to know.”

“You mean he talks with God?”

“Yes,” Jenelle answered firmly. She knew a lot of people didn’t understand that.

“Who is he?” Michelle asked.

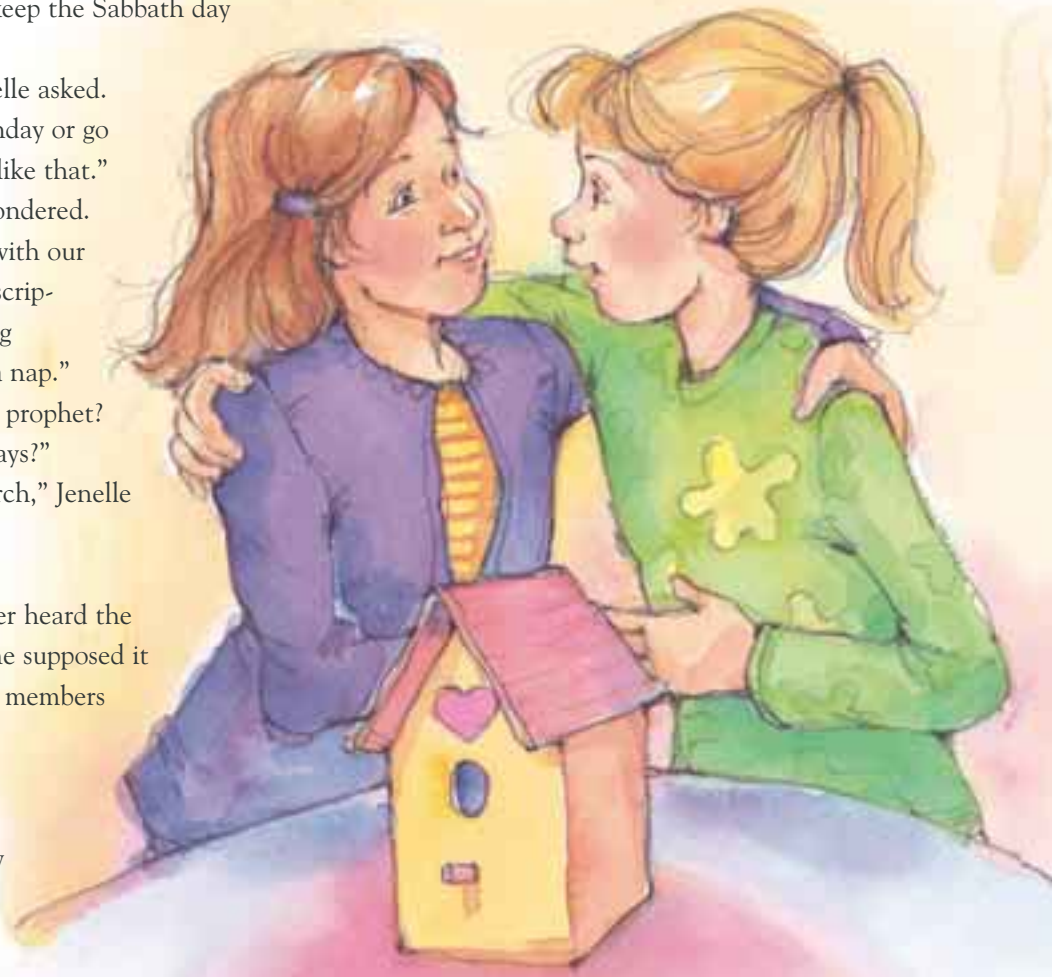
“Our prophet’s name is President Gordon B. Hinckley.”

“Do you have to do everything he says?”

“We don’t *have* to. We *choose* to,” Jenelle said, hoping Michelle understood.

“Can you come to my birthday party next year if it isn’t on Sunday?” Michelle asked.

Jenelle hugged her friend. “I’m already counting the days till then!” □



A PROPHET'S EXAMPLE



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

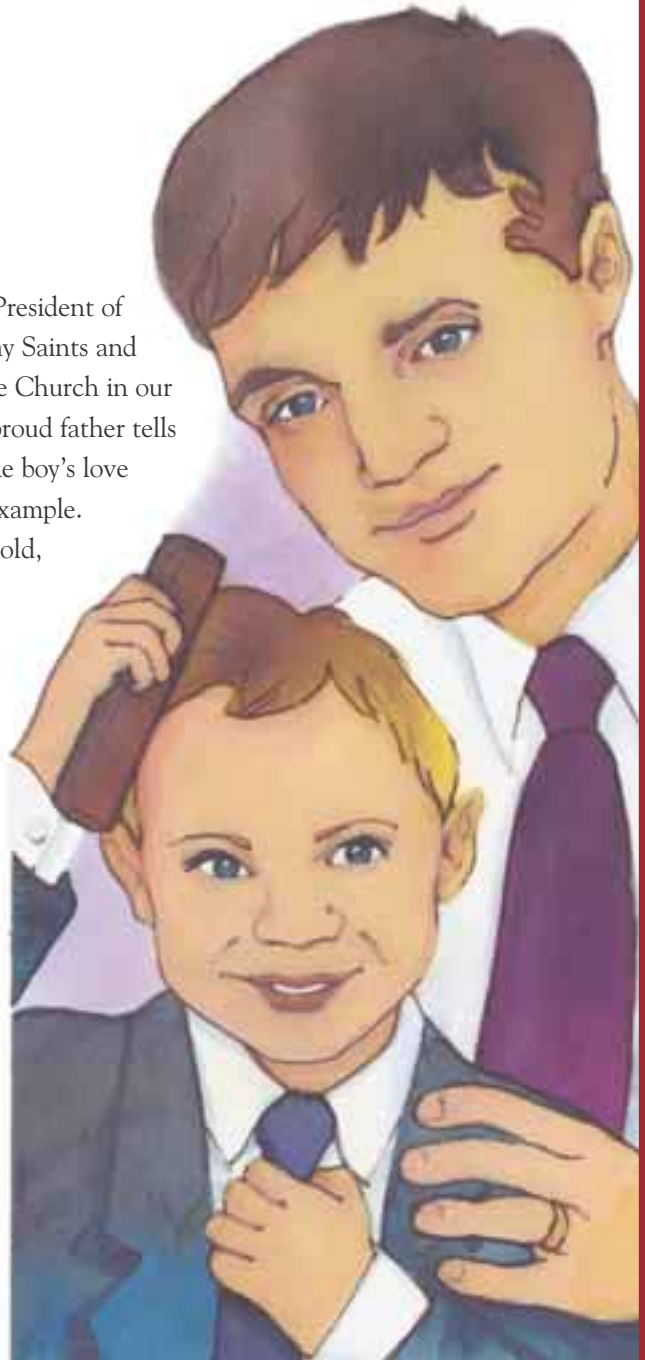
We sustain Gordon B. Hinckley as the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and as the prophet, seer, and revelator of the Church in our time. A letter which I received from a proud father tells of an experience with his then five-year-old son and of the boy's love for the President of the Church and desire to follow his example.

The father wrote: "When Christopher was five years old, he would get ready for church on Sundays mostly by himself. On one particular Sunday, he decided that he wanted to wear a suit and tie, which to that point he had never done. He scoured the closet on his own for a hand-me-down tie and produced a rather used clip-on one for which he didn't need to tie a knot. He attached the tie to his white shirt, then capped it off with the small navy jacket that had hung for years in the boys' closet.

"On his own, he went into the bathroom and painstakingly combed his blond hair to perfection. About that time, I came into the bathroom to finish getting ready myself. I found Christopher beaming at himself in the mirror. Without taking his eyes off his reflection, he proclaimed proudly, 'Look, Papa—Christopher B. Hinckley!'"

A boy had been watching the prophet of the Lord. □

Adapted from an October 1998 general conference address.



I CAN FOLLOW THE PROPHET

By Diane S. Nichols

“I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7).



In 1899 there was not enough water in southern Utah. For more than two years there had been no rain. The streams and wells around the town of St. George had dried up. There was no water for the crops, so the plants died. The cattle died too. Many people began moving away.

Nell was a little girl living in St. George at that time. Her father told her their family would have to move away soon.

In June, Nell and her mother went to a Church conference in St. George. President Lorenzo Snow, the prophet at that time, was going to speak. Nell's father stayed home to pack for their move. Nell listened carefully to what the prophet said. After the conference, she hurried home. She told her father that President Snow had promised if the people would pay their tithing and plant crops, it would rain and they would have food for the coming year.

Nell's father explained that their family couldn't survive another year if the crops didn't grow. Nell reminded him that her grandfather had talked about how the people in his day were blessed by doing exactly what President Brigham Young (1801–77) asked them to do. Grandfather had promised Nell that if she followed the living prophet, she would be blessed too. Nell believed her grandfather, and she offered to give her father her own savings to help pay their family's tithing.

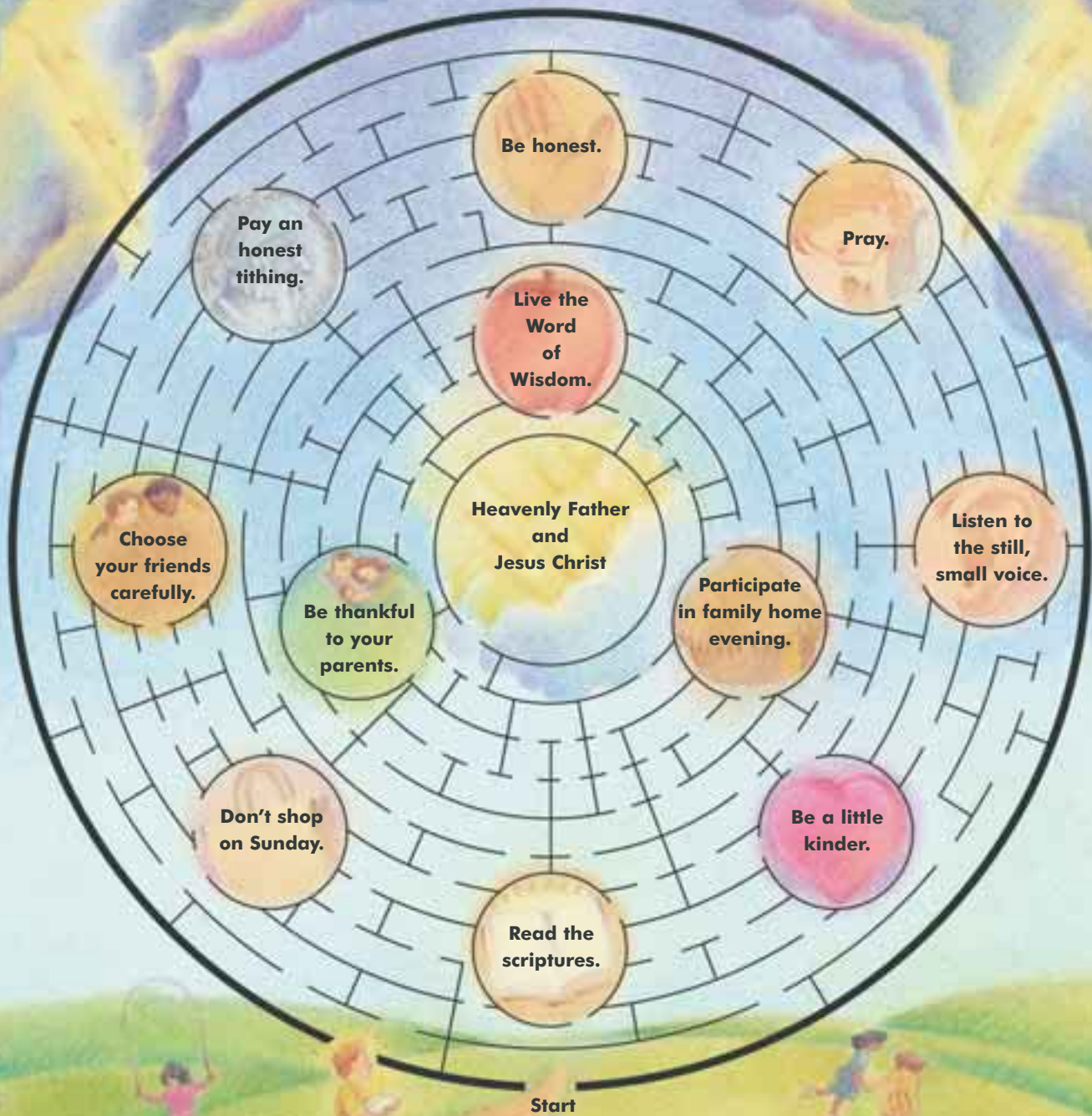
The next morning, Nell saw her father plowing the fields, getting ready to plant. Her family stayed in St. George and did exactly what the prophet asked them to do. During the hot, dry weeks that followed, the people of St. George paid their tithing, planted their fields, prayed, and watched the cloudless sky for rain. They were grateful when two months after the conference, it began to rain. The crops grew in abundance that year!

We will be blessed if we follow the living prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley. President Hinckley speaks for Heavenly Father. What he asks of us is what Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ want us to do. If we are obedient, we will be blessed.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Invite the bishop's or branch president's wife to tell about her husband's childhood, family, job, and duties as bishop or branch president. Explain that because of his testimony and his desire to sustain our prophet, he serves the ward or branch. Have the children think of things the bishop or branch president has asked them to do (pay tithing, pray as families, study the scriptures daily, hold family home evening, keep the Sabbath day holy, and so on). Explain that part of sustaining the bishop or branch president is doing what he asks us to do. Have each child trace his or her hand onto a piece of paper, cut it out, then write on it what he or she will do to sustain the bishop or branch president. Make a poster by gluing the hands onto a large piece of paper. If possible, present the bishop or branch president with the poster.

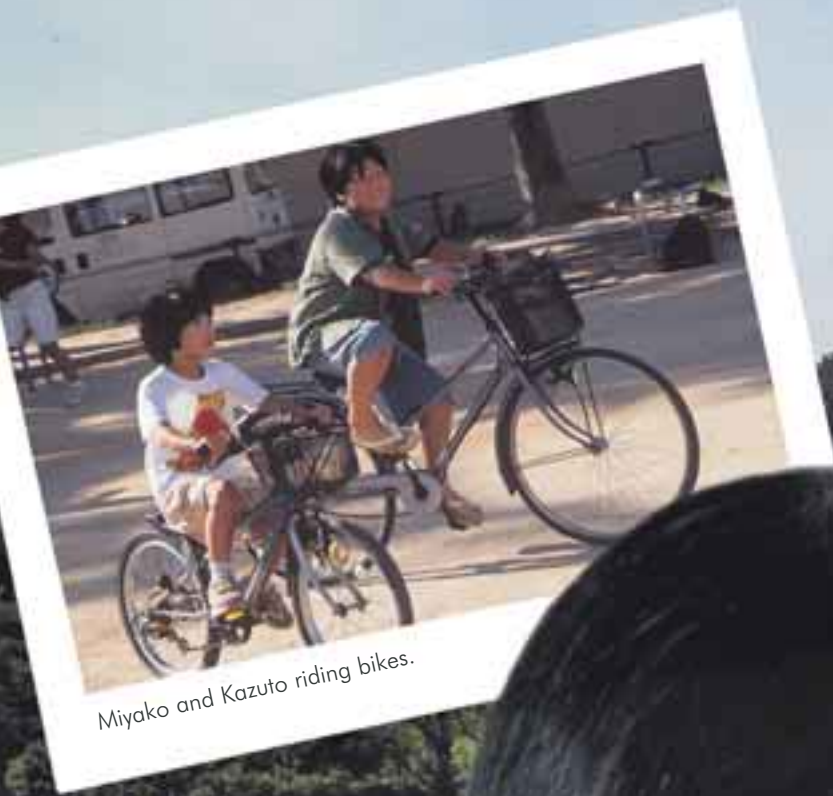
2. Prayerfully select a few gospel standards (see My Achievement Days booklet). Ask several adults to conduct teaching stations in various locations around the room to teach the principles selected. Have the children proceed from one station to the next. For example, at one station, the music leader



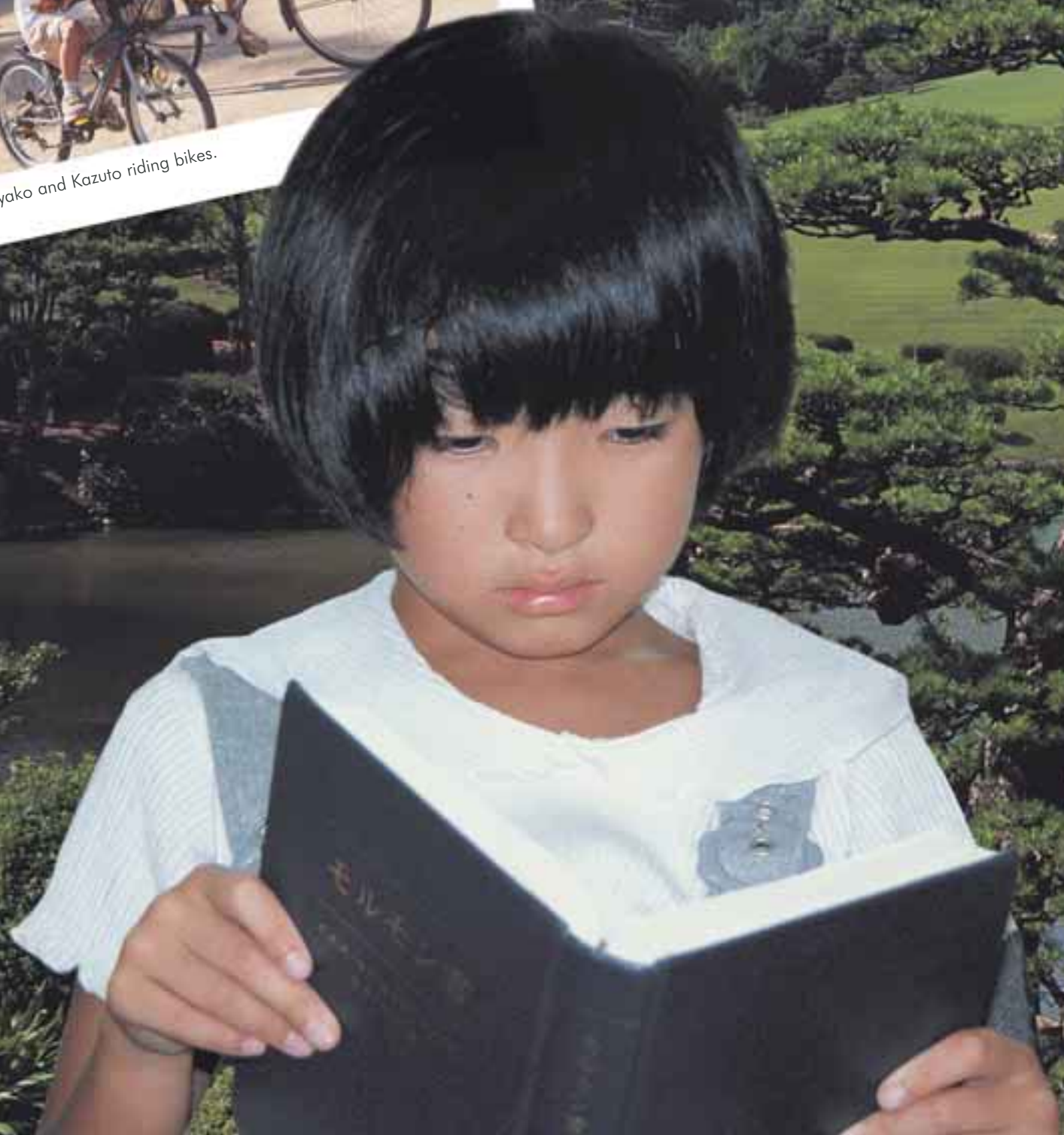
could teach a song. At another station, a member of the presidency could tell a story. At a third, the children could play a matching game. After the children have rotated through the stations, give each child a piece of paper that says, "I will always obey the prophet by _____." Have them write or draw one principle to work on during the coming week.

Instructions

Follow the teachings of President Gordon B. Hinckley to find your way through the maze to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Color the correct pathway; then cut out this page. Display it where it can remind you of some things you can do to return to live with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. □



Miyako and Kazuto riding bikes.



MAKING FRIENDS

Miyako Tashiro

of Osaka, Japan

By Melvin Leavitt

Eight-year-old Miyako Tashiro lives in Osaka, Japan. She loves this busy city, which is laced with many canals. She also loves her beautiful country.

Japan is a land of snowy peaks, dense forests, rushing rivers, and clouds of cherry blossoms. The Japanese people create beauty and art of their own as well.

Miyako is part of that artistic tradition. She plays the violin and the piano and practices many hours each week. Her brother, Kazuto, age 12, also plays the violin, and her father, Shigeharu, plays the guitar. When the three of them practice and perform together, Miyako is filled with happiness.

She is learning the art of baking from her mother, Suzuko. They make delicious cakes, cookies, homemade ice cream, and other delicacies. Sister Tashiro is also teaching Miyako the art of origami—folding paper to make flowers, animals, and other figures.

Miyako possesses many of the virtues most valued in Japan. She is obedient to her parents, awake to beauty, and

devoted to any task she undertakes. She is a good student and does her homework willingly. Her favorite school subject is arts and crafts, where she learns to sculpt and draw.

Miyako isn't always serious, though. She can start the whole family laughing by making funny faces. With her friends, she enjoys trading stickers, playing tag, doing tricks on the horizontal bar, riding her bicycle, and jumping rope.

She and Kazuto are close friends. In addition to the violin, they both study Chanbara, a form of sword fighting. They wear helmets and use foam rubber swords, of course.

Miyako loves the gospel and Primary. Each evening she reads the Book of Mormon aloud to her mother. She also reminds everyone of family home evening.

Missionary work comes naturally to Miyako. Once when she was at a friend's house, she suddenly announced that she had to leave because it was time for family home evening. Intrigued, her friend's mother



Miyako and her mother, Suzuko.



Miyako and an origami figure.



Miyako loves jumping rope.



Putting away the family's shoes is one of Miyako's chores.



Gospel study with the family.



Performing with her brother and father.

asked her to explain, and Miyako did. Another time, she told a friend that she prays often to Heavenly Father. The friend asked questions, and Miyako taught her how to pray.

Miyako was recently baptized and confirmed a member of the Church. She remembers feeling "clean and clear," she says. She wants to be able to have the Holy Ghost as a constant companion, so she listens carefully for the still, small voice.

She has great faith in the priesthood. If she isn't feeling well, she asks for a blessing, and when her father puts his hands on her head, she fully expects to be healed. "Her faith has increased my faith," Brother Tashiro says.

One of Miyako's favorite places is beautiful Mino Mountain, which the family visits each summer. They take a lunch and hike to a waterfall. There they feast on both the food and the view.

Miyako is a kind girl who loves beauty, her family, Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ. She is a girl determined to share the beauty of Japan and of the gospel with everyone. □

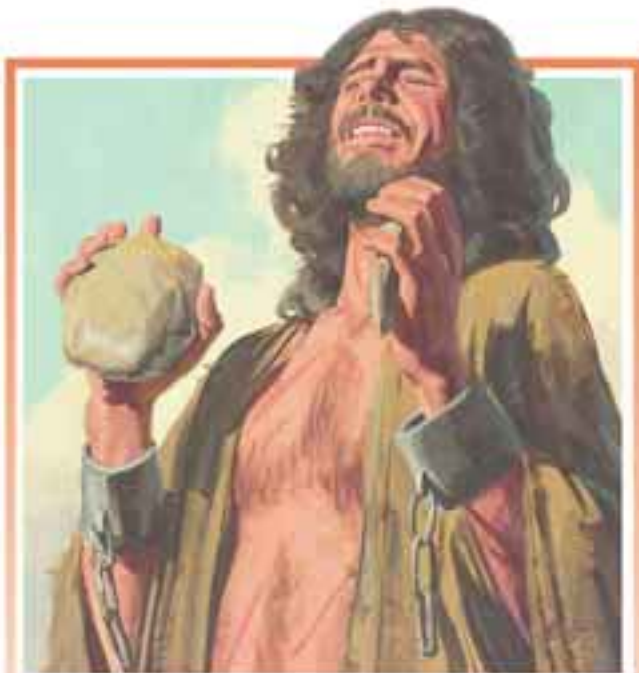
THE MAN WITH THE EVIL SPIRITS



ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL MANN

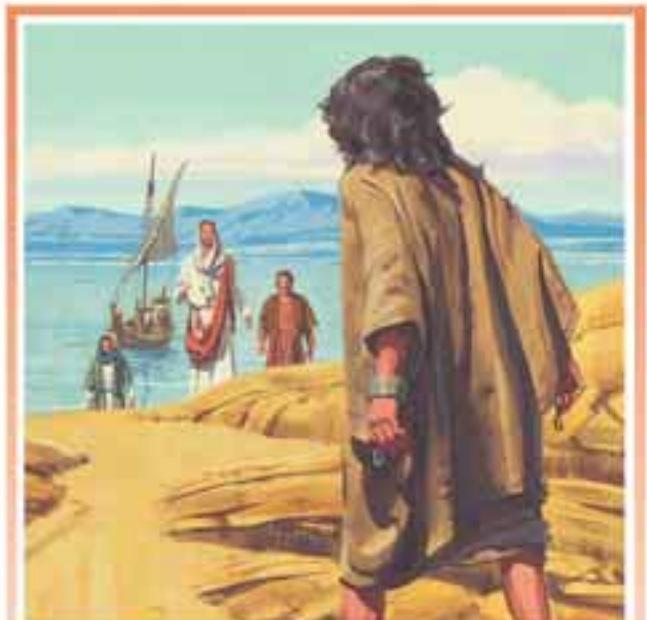
A man who lived in the mountains by the Sea of Galilee had an evil spirit in him that made him act wild. People tried to stop him by tying him with ropes and chains, but he broke the ropes and the chains.

Mark 5:1-4



The man spent all night and all day in the mountains and caves. He cried all the time and cut himself with stones.

Mark 5:5



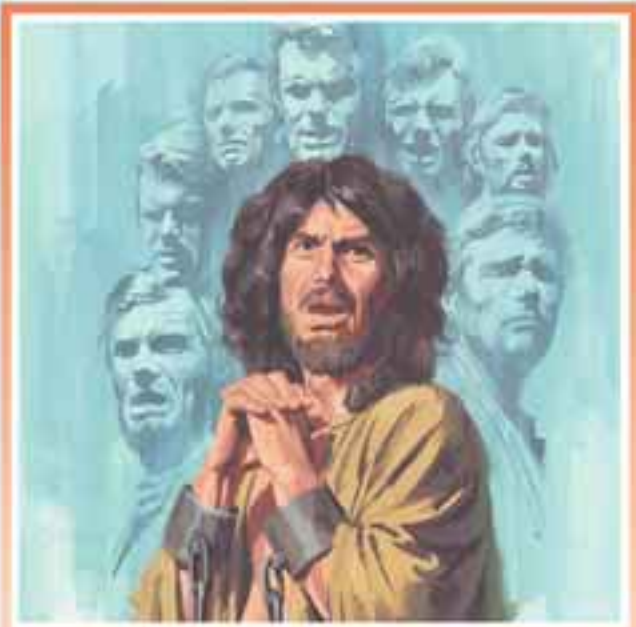
One day Jesus and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee in a boat. When the Savior left the boat, the man ran to Him.

Mark 5:1-2, 6



Jesus told the evil spirit to come out of the man. The evil spirit knew Jesus. He called Him the Son of God. He asked Jesus not to hurt him.

Mark 5:7-8



When the Savior asked the evil spirit what his name was, he said, "My name is Legion." *Legion* means many, and there were many evil spirits in the man. They asked Jesus not to send them away but to send them into the bodies of some nearby pigs.

Mark 5:9-12



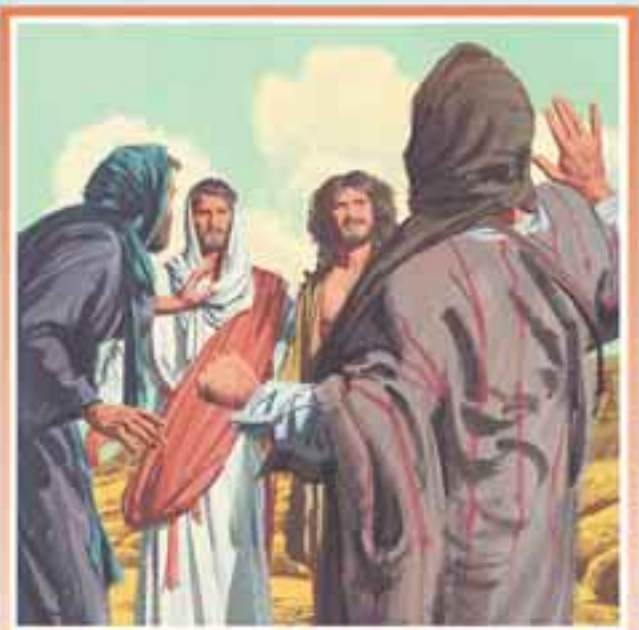
Jesus agreed. The evil spirits left the man and went into the bodies of about 2,000 pigs. After the evil spirits entered them, the pigs ran down the hill into the sea and drowned.

Mark 5:13



The men who cared for the pigs ran to the city and told many people what had happened. The people came and saw Jesus. They saw the wild man too, but he was not wild anymore.

Mark 5:14-15



The people who came from the city could not understand. When other people told them what had happened, all of them were afraid of Jesus and asked Him to go away. He went back into the boat.

Mark 5:15-18



The man who was healed wanted to go with Him. The Savior told him not to come but to tell his friends what He had done for him.

Mark 5:18-19



The man did tell his friends, and all marveled at Jesus' great power.

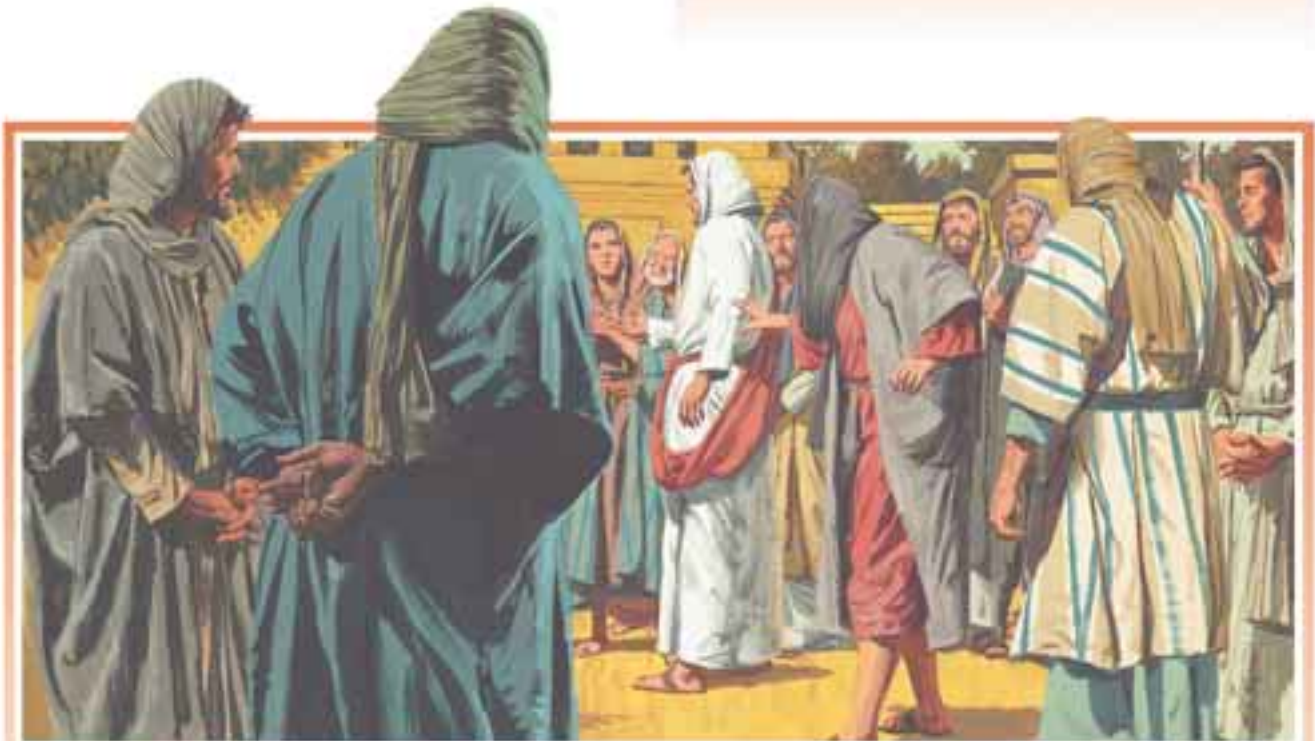
Mark 5:20

A WOMAN TOUCHES JESUS' CLOTHES



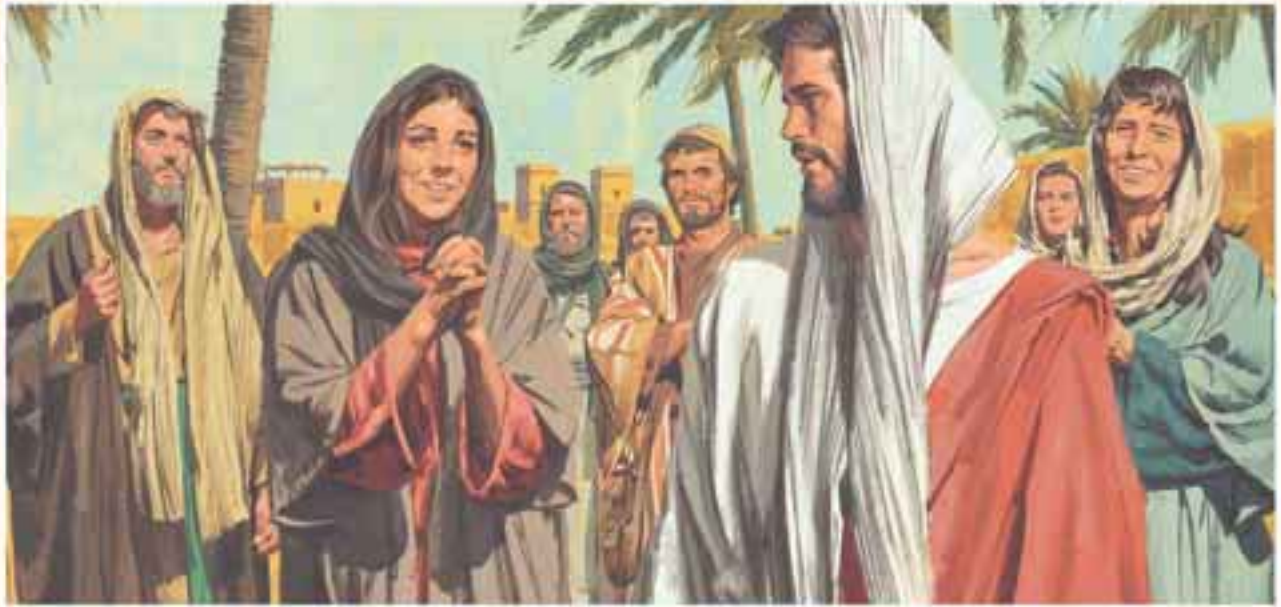
A woman who was very sick had been to many doctors. She had been sick for 12 years, but the doctors could not heal her.

Mark 5:25–26



One day she saw Jesus surrounded by many people. She had heard about Him and believed she would be healed even if she could only touch His clothing. She reached out and touched the hem of His clothes.

Mark 5:27–28



She was healed immediately. Jesus turned around and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

Mark 5:29–30



Afraid, the woman knelt by the Savior and admitted that she had touched Him. Jesus said her faith had made her well.

Mark 5:33–34



Obeying My Parents

By Gustavo Adolfo Loaiza Vergara

One day I went to the beach with my brother and my mom. When our mom sat down to rest for a minute, she told us to wait for her, but my brother and I kept walking. Suddenly, we realized we were lost. We went back to where Mom had been, but we could not find her. I started to cry, and some people tried to help us. Finally our aunt found us.

While we were lost, I said a prayer. Our dad taught us that if we do not know what to do, we can say a prayer. I said one, very quietly, and then we were found. I learned that we should always obey our parents. And I know Heavenly Father hears us when we pray.

Gustavo Adolfo Loaiza Vergara, age 8, is a member of the Puerto Varas Estación Ward, Puerto Varas Chile Stake.



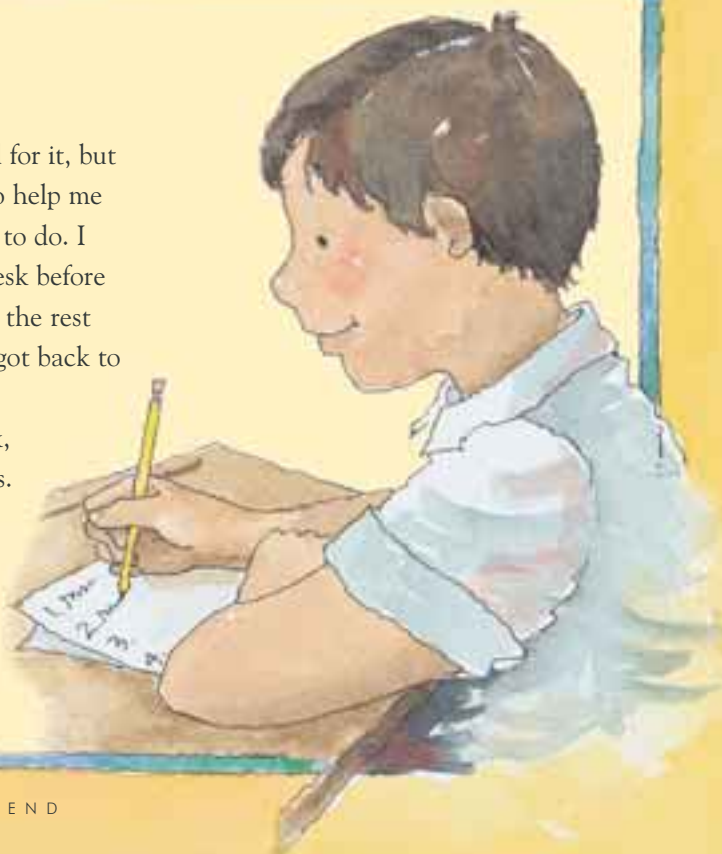
Prayer Helps

By Francisco Javier Loaiza Vergara

One afternoon I had a math quiz. I had studied for it, but I had forgotten to have a prayer to ask the Lord to help me do my best. I was nervous and did not know what to do. I wanted to have more than a silent prayer at my desk before I took the test. I asked the teacher if I could go to the rest room. Then I left class and said a prayer. When I got back to the room, I felt very calm.

The next day the teacher gave our quizzes back, and I realized I had done well. I know prayer helps. When we do our best and then ask for His help, the Lord blesses us. □

Francisco Javier Loaiza Vergara, age 10, is a member of the Puerto Varas Estación Ward, Puerto Varas Chile Stake.





Joseph Smith and Levi Hancock, by Clark Kelley Price

Among the early converts to the Church was Levi W. Hancock, ordained in 1835 as one of the Presidents of the Seventy. A carpenter by trade, Levi helped build temples, served a mission to Missouri, and participated in Zion's Camp and the Mormon Battalion. He was a loyal friend to the Prophet Joseph Smith.



ENGLISH



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