

The cover of The New Era magazine for December 2007 features a night-time photograph of the Salt Lake Temple. The temple is illuminated with white lights, and its spires are prominent against a dark blue sky. In the foreground, several trees and bushes are decorated with warm white and pink Christmas lights. A large, illuminated tree on the left side of the cover is particularly striking. The title 'THE New Era' is written in large, bold, orange letters at the top, with 'THE' in a smaller font above 'New Era'. The month 'DECEMBER' and the year '2007' are also displayed in white text.

THE
New Era

DECEMBER

2007

COVER STORY:
SEASON OF
LIGHT, PP. 2, 28

BEST GIFTS, P. 18

WHAT JOSEPH
TAUGHT, P. 10

AND MORE GREAT
CHRISTMAS STORIES

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Senior Designer: Fay P. Andrus

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The glow of Christmas

lights reminds us of the light of Christ. See "The Light of Truth," p. 28.



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Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT
84150-3220, USA

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Advent SEASON



In our times of grateful meditation, we acknowledge the Savior's priceless gift to us and pledge our love and faith. This is what Christmas is really all about.

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

Our joy at this season is because the Savior Jesus Christ came into the world.

In each of us there is at Christmastime something of our childhood. We all revel in the fun of Christmas—of giving and receiving tinsel presents, of singing favorite carols, of feasting on goodies we never miss at other seasons, of gathering together as family and friends, all having a wonderful time.

But there is something else, something better, and that is to sit together as families and read again the fascinating story of the birth of Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem of Judea.¹

A Season to Remember the Savior

It is proper during this season when we commemorate His birth that we remember the Lord Jesus Christ in reverence and with love. He has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. He has brought meaning to our mortal existence. He has given us the gift of eternal life.²

When all is said and done, when all the legions of the ages have passed in review, when man's terrible inhumanity to man has been chronicled, when God's great love for His children has been measured, then above all stands the lone figure of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, the Savior of mankind, the living Son of the living God, the Prince of Peace, the Holy One.

Isaiah spoke of Him centuries before His coming: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

Nephi, long before the Master's birth, was given a vision of His coming. He saw in that vision the mother of Christ, "a virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins" (1 Nephi 11:15).

Of her He was born in Bethlehem of Judea, and the angel said unto Nephi, "Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!" (1 Nephi 11:21).

And Nephi "beheld that he went forth ministering unto the people, in power and great glory; and the multitudes were



Isaiah spoke of Him centuries before His coming: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

gathered together to hear him; and . . . they cast him out from among them.” And He “was lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world” (1 Nephi 11:28, 33).

All of these ancient visions were fulfilled. He came to earth. He walked the dusty roads of Palestine, teaching the people, healing the sick, causing the blind to see, raising the dead, giving His life on Calvary’s cross, and rising on the third day to “become the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20).

He had been the Creator of this earth, under His Father’s direction, for as John records, “without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). He was the great Jehovah who spoke with the prophets of old.

He was the lowly babe who came to earth in the meridian of time and brought to us the gift of Christmas. He was the Resurrection and the Life, who brought to us the wonder of Easter.³

There would be no Christmas if there had not been Easter. The babe Jesus of Bethlehem would be but another baby without the redeeming Christ of Gethsemane and Calvary, and the triumphant fact of the Resurrection.

I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal, Living God. None so great has ever walked the earth. None other has made a comparable sacrifice or granted a comparable blessing. He is the Savior and the Redeemer of the world. I believe in Him. I declare His divinity without equivocation or compromise. I love Him. I speak His name in reverence and wonder. I worship Him as I worship His Father, in spirit and in truth. I thank Him and kneel before His Beloved Son who reached out long ago and said to each of us, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).⁴

A Season of Increased Love

And so at this Christmas season, we sing His praises and speak our words of faith and gratitude and love. It is His influence in our lives that stirs within us more kindness, more respect, more love, more concern. It is

because of Him and His teachings that we reach out to those in trouble, distress, and need wherever they may be.⁵

What a glorious season is this time of Christmas. Hearts are softened. Voices are raised in worship. Kindness and mercy are reenthroned as elements in our lives. There is an accelerated reaching out to those in distress. There is an aura of peace that comes into our homes. There is a measure of love that is not felt to the same extent at any other time of the year.⁶

Said Jesus: “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” (Matthew 7:12.)

May I remind us at this Christmas season that if only each of us would reflect occasionally on that Christ-given mandate and make an effort to observe it, this would be a different world. There would be greater happiness in our homes; there would be kinder feelings among our associates; there would be much less of litigation and a greater effort to compose differences. There would be a new measure of love and appreciation and respect.

There would be more generous hearts, more thoughtful consideration and concern, and a greater desire to spread the gospel of peace and to advance the work of salvation among the children of men.⁷

A Season of Meditation

Christmas is more than trees and twinkling lights, more than toys and gifts and baubles of a hundred varieties. It is love. It is the love of the Son of God for all mankind. It reaches out beyond our power to comprehend. It is magnificent and beautiful.

It is peace. It is the peace which comforts, which sustains, which blesses all who accept it.

It is faith. It is faith in God and His Eternal Son. It is faith in His wondrous ways and message. It is faith in Him as our Redeemer and our Lord.

We testify of His living reality. We testify of the divinity of His nature. In our times of grateful meditation, we acknowledge His priceless gift to us and pledge our love and faith. This is what Christmas is really about.⁸

For each of you may this be a merry Christmas. But

more importantly, I wish for each of you a time, perhaps only an hour, spent in silent meditation and quiet reflection on the wonder and the majesty of this, the Son of God. Our joy at this season is because He came into the world. The peace that comes from Him, His infinite love which each of us may feel, and an overwhelming sense of gratitude for that which He freely gave us at so great a cost to Himself—these are of the true essence of Christmas.⁹ **NE**

NOTES

1. "To Do Good Always," *Ensign*, Dec. 1994, 2.
2. "A Testimony of the Son of God," *Ensign*, Dec. 2002, 5
3. "My Redeemer Lives," *Ensign*, Feb. 2001, 71.
4. "The Wondrous and True Story of Christmas," *Ensign*, Dec. 2000, 5.
5. "A Testimony of the Son of God," 4-5.
6. "The Wondrous and True Story of Christmas," 2.
7. "Do Ye Even So to Them," *Ensign*, Dec. 1991, 4.
8. "A Season for Gratitude," *Ensign*, Dec. 1997, 4-5.
9. "The Wondrous and True Story of Christmas," 5.

At this Christmas season, we sing His praises and speak our words of faith and gratitude and love. It is His influence in our lives that stirs within us more kindness, more respect, more love, more concern.





A PROPHET

BY JADE SWARTZBERG

To my dad it came as glorious news—there are prophets on the earth today.

I have always known that Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, came to earth 2,000 years ago and that we have a living prophet of God on the earth today. But my father, Roy Swartzberg, who was raised as a Jew, did not always know.

Growing up in an Orthodox Jewish home in South Africa, my dad knew about the Old Testament prophets, like Moses and Elijah, and he knew of the miracles they performed. When he heard about Moses parting the Red Sea or Elijah calling down fire from heaven, he marveled at the things these men could do for the people and wondered why there were no prophets on the earth today.

It was shortly after my dad's bar mitzvah that he first heard about the Prophet Joseph Smith. At the time he was living with his Jewish grandparents. His mother

had passed away, and his father had remarried and joined the Church.

One afternoon my dad's older brother, Mark, sat down with him and told him that he had joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He then told my dad about Joseph Smith, the First Vision, and the Restoration of the gospel and prophets to the earth. My dad says that something felt very right as he listened to his older brother bear testimony, and my dad already had faith in Heavenly Father and in prophets. To him, this was glorious news! There were prophets on the earth, and people once again spoke with God. He felt himself wishing it to be true.

After sharing his testimony with my dad, Mark invited him to pray about it. But as a Jewish boy, he had prayed only in Hebrew, standing up and facing in the direction of



ON THE EARTH

Jerusalem, the Holy City. Mark explained how Latter-day Saints pray: kneeling, with arms folded to show reverence. This was new to him. He knelt to offer his first personal prayer to Heavenly Father.

Although the news about prophets felt right to my dad and he had a good feeling after his prayer, he did not decide to listen to the missionaries right away.

Soon he and his brother were sent to live with their step-grandparents, who were members of the Church. On Sundays the family would attend their Sabbath meetings, but my dad continued to go to the synagogue every Friday night and Saturday morning to observe the Jewish Sabbath.

He began, however, to attend Mutual activities with his brother, and when the seminary program was introduced in South Africa, he went to that too. There he learned about the Book of Mormon. The first scripture he ever memorized that wasn't in Hebrew was 1 Nephi 3:7: "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."

The missionaries were diligent in visiting him once a week, and after a while he started attending sacrament meeting in addition to his synagogue meetings. Finally, as he gained a testimony of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, he decided to listen to the missionary lessons. My dad was baptized on Christmas Day in 1973—the first time he celebrated the Savior's birth.

The story of my father's journey to the truth has given me a greater perspective, and his testimony of prophets has become a part of my own. Today I wear a small Star of David necklace as a token linking me to the Jewish heritage that I am proud of, but it also represents faith. It is because my father had faith in prophets as a young teen that I am blessed with a similar faith.

I know that President Gordon B. Hinckley is a prophet today just as Moses was, and I am so grateful for that fact! The heavens are indeed open, and through revelation, communication with our Heavenly Father continues today as in days of old. **NE**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID J. ZUSKIND, EXCEPT AS NOTED; ELIJAH CONTENTS AGAINST THE PRIESTS OF BAAL, BY JERRY HARSTON; PHOTOGRAPH OF PRESIDENT HINCKLEY BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN

Sharing Christmas

We knew our first Christmas as Latter-day Saints would be different. But sharing is what made it extraordinary.

BY DAIANA MELINA ALBORNOZ DÍAZ

When I was 17, my mother had a sewing job for a doll factory. She worked from home, but she would go to the factory to get more to do and to turn in her work. The man she gave her sewing to had something special about him.

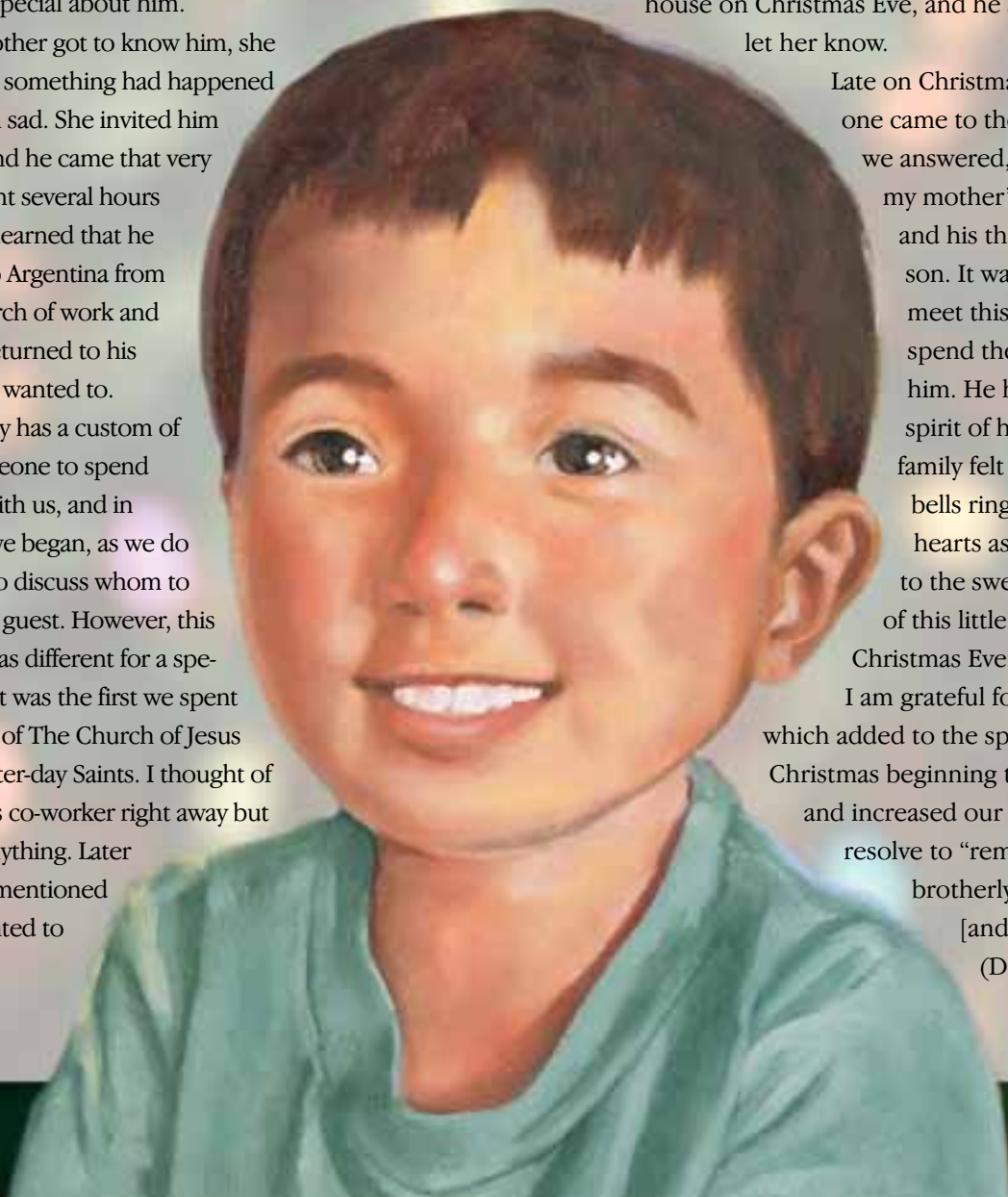
As my mother got to know him, she realized that something had happened to make him sad. She invited him to visit us, and he came that very day and spent several hours with us. We learned that he had come to Argentina from Brazil in search of work and had never returned to his home, as he wanted to.

Our family has a custom of inviting someone to spend Christmas with us, and in December we began, as we do every year, to discuss whom to invite as our guest. However, this Christmas was different for a special reason; it was the first we spent as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I thought of my mother's co-worker right away but didn't say anything. Later my mother mentioned that she wanted to invite him.

The next time my mother turned in her sewing, she asked him whom he was going to spend the holidays with, and he replied that he didn't know. My mother told him how nice it would be if he would come to our house on Christmas Eve, and he said he would let her know.

Late on Christmas Eve, someone came to the door. When we answered, there stood my mother's co-worker and his three-year-old son. It was exciting to meet this little boy and spend the evening with him. He had the loving spirit of his father. Our family felt like we had bells ringing in our hearts as we listened to the sweet singing of this little boy on Christmas Eve.

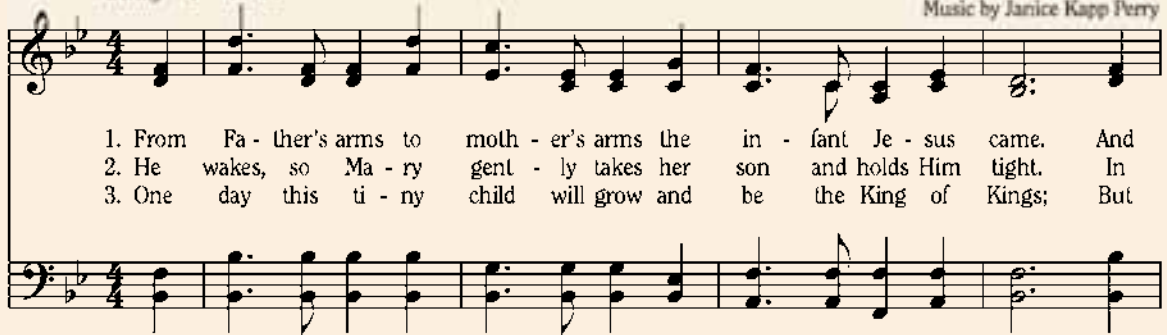
I am grateful for the gospel, which added to the spirit of our Christmas beginning that year and increased our family's resolve to "remember . . . brotherly kindness [and] charity" (D&C 4:6). **NE**



From Father's Arms to Mother's Arms

Gently ♩ = 72-80

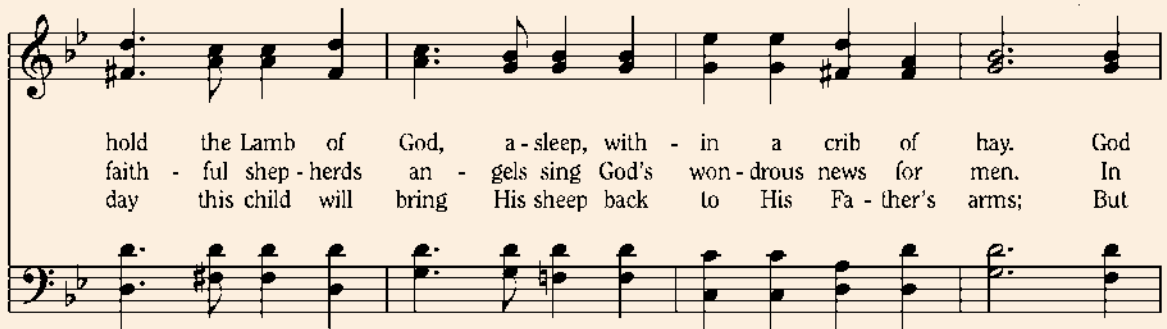
Words by John V. Pearson
Music by Janice Kapp Perry



1. From Fa - ther's arms to moth - er's arms the in - fant Je - sus came. And
2. He wakes, so Ma - ry gent - ly takes her son and holds Him tight. In
3. One day this ti - ny child will grow and be the King of Kings; But



with this birth God sent to earth sal - va - tion in His name. Be -
moth - er's arms He's safe from harm, from cold, and dark of night. To
now He rests in Ma - ry's arms while lul - la - bies she sings. One



hold the Lamb of God, a - sleep, with - in a crib of hay. God
faith - ful shep - herds an - gels sing God's won - drous news for men. In
day this child will bring His sheep back to His Fa - ther's arms; But



sends His ti - ny mir - a - cle to save the world one day.
haste the shep - herds run to see and kneel be - fore the Lamb.
now He sleeps, so Ma - ry keeps her ba - by safe and warm.

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WHAT JOSEPH TAUGHT

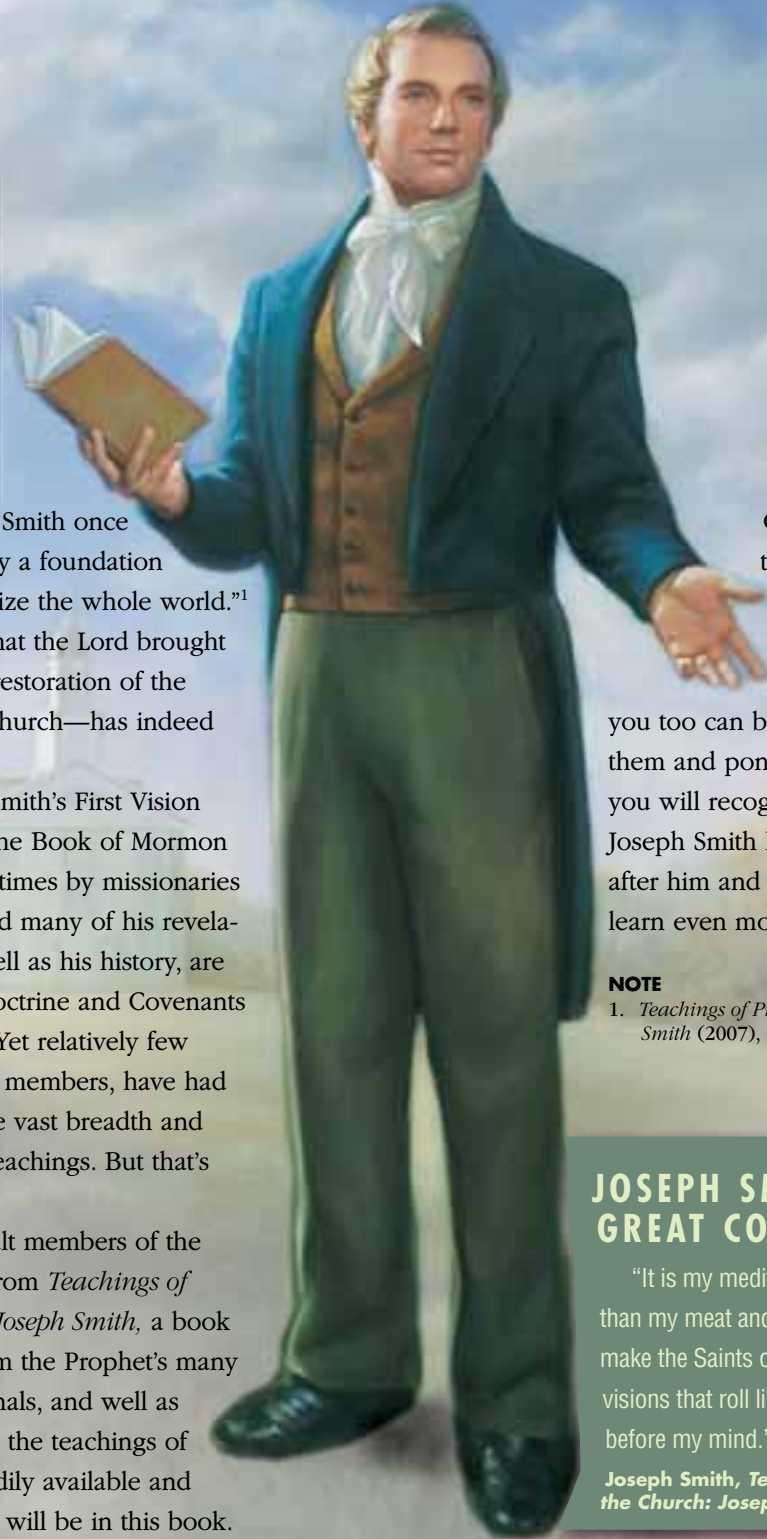
A new book can help us learn more about the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith.



The Prophet Joseph Smith once said, “I intend to lay a foundation that will revolutionize the whole world.”¹ Today we can see that what the Lord brought about through him—the restoration of the gospel and Christ’s true Church—has indeed revolutionized the world.

The stories of Joseph Smith’s First Vision and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon have been told countless times by missionaries throughout the world. And many of his revelations and teachings, as well as his history, are widely available in the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price. Yet relatively few people, including Church members, have had more than glimpses of the vast breadth and depth of Joseph Smith’s teachings. But that’s about to change.

Beginning in 2008, adult members of the Church will be studying from *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, a book containing statements from the Prophet’s many sermons, letters, and journals, and well as other sources. Never have the teachings of Joseph Smith been as readily available and widely distributed as they will be in this book.



Over the next two years, the *New Era* will share many of the Prophet Joseph Smith’s teachings with you so that you too can become familiar with them and ponder them. We hope that you will recognize the foundation Joseph Smith laid for all that has come after him and that you will want to learn even more about him. **NE**

NOTE

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 512.

JOSEPH SMITH’S GREAT CONCERN

“It is my meditation all the day, and more than my meat and drink, to know how I shall make the Saints of God comprehend the visions that roll like an overflowing surge before my mind.”

Joseph Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, 520.

GOD THE ETERNAL FATHER

Through revelation, Joseph Smith learned the true character of God and our relationship to Him.

In the spring of 1820, Joseph Smith's First Vision ushered in the restoration of the gospel. Though many other revelations followed, that first event restored some remarkable yet simple truths about our Heavenly Father. President Gordon B. Hinckley has said, "In the short time of that remarkable vision Joseph learned more concerning Deity than all of the scholars and clerics of the past" ("The Great Things Which God Has Revealed," *Ensign*, May 2005, 81). In the years that followed, Joseph's understanding only grew. Here are some of the things he taught about God the Eternal Father.

GOD'S CHARACTER

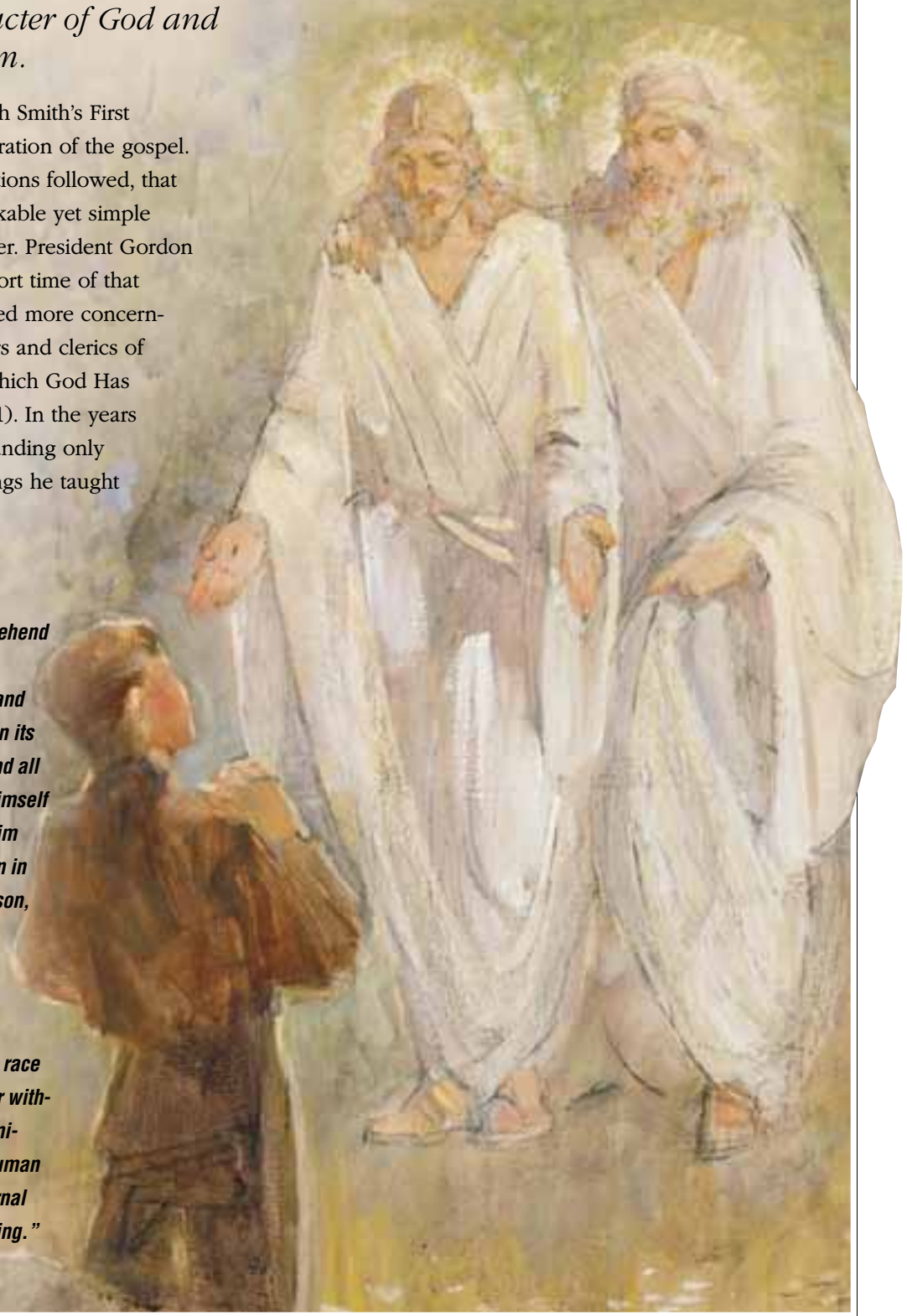
"If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves. . . .

". . . If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by His power, was to make Himself visible,—I say, if you were to see Him today, you would see Him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man."

OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

"While one portion of the human race is judging and condemning the other without mercy, the Great Parent of the universe looks upon the whole of the human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard; He views them as His offspring."

From Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith, 39–40.



THE FIRST VISION, BY MINERVA K. TEICHERT, COURTESY OF RAY M. AND LAFOND POPE HALL; DO NOT COPY

GOOD QUESTION, TRENT

BY ALEX LAVELLE

My friend's question finally made me think seriously about the Church.

My friend Trent was a little confused when I explained I couldn't help pass the sacrament because I wasn't even a member. That's when the question came, "So . . . do you want to be baptized?"

I grew up in my mother's home, but I eventually moved in with my father and stepmother, who were both members of the Church. They always lovingly invited me to go to church with them, but I always kindly said, "No, thanks."

After a year, I finally decided to start going to church with them. I found out that it wasn't as bad as I thought that it would be. The chapel was very close to the house, and I could enjoy the company of my parents and friends there. I kept going to church, but only because it was convenient.

One day, just before sacrament meeting, Trent, a friend of mine, came up and asked me, "Hey, Alex, do you want to help pass the sacrament?"

I was shocked at what he'd asked. "No, I'm not even a member," I told him.

He seemed confused. "So, you're not baptized?" he asked.

"No," I said, "I'm not baptized."

There was an awkward pause while he tried to think of something to say. Then the words finally came out, "So . . . do you want to be baptized?"

"No," I answered simply. "No, I don't want to be baptized."

"Oh, I see," he said. There was another awkward pause. Then he said, "Well, see you at Sunday School."

I can just imagine how embarrassed and uncomfortable Trent must have felt as he returned to his seat, but what neither of us knew was that he'd planted a seed somewhere deep within me. When I sat down, I couldn't get his question out of my head. I thought to myself, "How ridiculous! Of course I don't want to be baptized! There's no way I . . . well . . ."

Then, for the first time in my life, I realized that I'd never found out for myself if the Church was true. Then I couldn't help but ask myself, "Do I want to be baptized?"

One night I was off by myself and still thinking about Trent's question. I knelt down and asked Heavenly Father to help me find the truth. As I thought about it, I felt strongly that I should investigate the Church. When I got home that night, I asked my stepmother if she could set up visits with the missionaries for me.

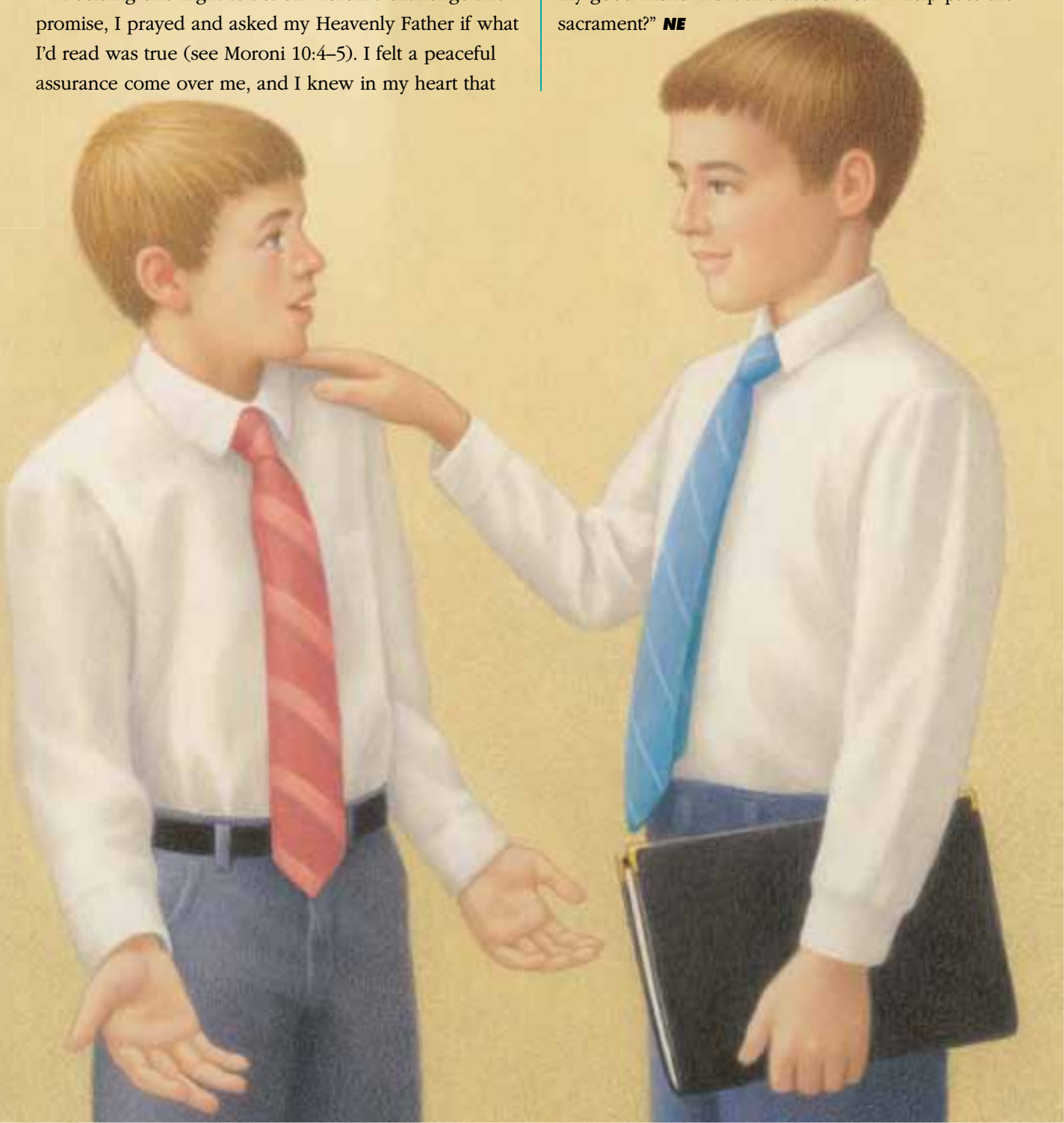
The elders came and explained the restoration of the gospel. They cleared up much of the misunderstanding I'd had about the Church and answered all my tough questions. They also gave me a copy of the Book of Mormon, and I fell in love with reading it. For weeks I carried it around in my pocket and read it every chance I had.

Deciding one night to act on Moroni's challenge and promise, I prayed and asked my Heavenly Father if what I'd read was true (see Moroni 10:4-5). I felt a peaceful assurance come over me, and I knew in my heart that

the Book of Mormon was true!

I ran upstairs, excited, and told my parents the answer to Trent's question: "I do want to be baptized!"

On December 25th I had a very "white" Christmas. Not only was there snow on the ground, but I was also dressed in my white baptism clothes. A few weeks later, after receiving the Aaronic Priesthood, I went up to my good friend Trent and asked: "Can I help pass the sacrament?" **NE**



Q & A

“How can I strengthen my testimony to make sure I stay strong in the gospel?”

NEW ERA

Your testimony will be strengthened when the Holy Ghost testifies to you of spiritual truths. Here are a few ways to invite the Spirit into your life:

First, have effective daily scripture study.

Instead of forcing your eyes open for 15 minutes to quickly read your scriptures each night, really feast upon the words of Christ. As you study and ponder, your understanding will deepen, and you will feel the Holy Ghost, which will strengthen your testimony.

Make sure you are worthy to have the Spirit with you. Being worthy allows the Spirit to prompt you to act in ways that will be pleasing to Heavenly Father. You will also be able to feel the Spirit comforting you and assuring you that the gospel is true and that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love you. Taking the sacrament worthily each week will help you have the Spirit with you.

Don't overlook your sins, even the small ones. For instance, don't lie; try not to be critical of people; tell your brother or sister you are sorry for yelling. Sin pulls you away from

■ **Truly commit to study and ponder the scriptures.**

■ **Make sure you are worthy to have the Holy Ghost with you at all times.**

■ **Make sure you repent humbly even for little sins.**

■ **Think about what your testimony is based on.**

■ **Bear your testimony often.**

the Lord's Spirit. Get in the habit of thinking about your thoughts and actions and, when needed, sincerely repenting.

Take some time to evaluate your testimony. Do you have a firm personal testimony of the Savior, Joseph Smith, and the Book of Mormon? Or do you go to church because that's where your friends are? Remember that the Church's mission is to bring people to Jesus Christ. Build your testimony upon the rock of Christ, “a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build, they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12).

Finally, confirm to yourself what you know by sharing your beliefs with someone else.

As prompted by the Spirit, bear your testimony, whether in testimony meeting, to your friends or family, or to people you meet. As you do, your testimony will be strengthened, and you will truly desire to stay strong in the gospel. Even the strongest testimonies will weaken if they are not put to use.

However, remember that having a testimony is not enough to keep you



READERS

from straying. It was only after the Lamanites gained a testimony and were *converted* unto the Lord that they “never did fall away” (Alma 23:6). The scriptures remind us to pray always and be careful not to fall into temptation (see D&C 20:32–34). Don’t be discouraged if the process of developing your testimony and strengthening your conversion is slow. As you rely on the power of the Holy Ghost, a firm conviction will come. **NE**



I received my testimony through scripture study and constant prayer. That is not where it all ended. I keep studying and praying and

fasting. That gives me a fresh understanding of the gospel and keeps me in the strait and narrow path. I believe that with fresh understanding comes a stronger belief. The more you come to understand the gospel, the more you obey God’s commandments and stay true to the gospel.

Beatrice C., 21, Zimbabwe



I think there is no better way to strengthen your testimony than to realize first that you need the gospel in your life.

Examples of other members who testify that the Church is true help greatly as well. In addition, you can talk with your friends from your branch or ward about the gospel and what it means to them. If you do at least these things and ask Heavenly Father in your daily prayers with a real desire to increase your faith,

then He will answer you. He will give you the confidence and joy that come with accepting the gospel as an everlasting source of wisdom and happiness.

Maxim K., 22, Ukraine

Doing Duty to God or Personal Progress is one way to strengthen your testimony. Always attend Church meetings and Mutual, and always bear your testimony. Listen to your parents and Church leaders. Then you will feel the Spirit and know you are on the right track.

Earlson N., 20, Luzon, Philippines



As you are gaining a testimony and once you already have one, keep a scripture journal. Record your spiritual experiences. Record lessons or impressions you get from

talks in church. Record anything that is special to you spiritually, even if at the time it seems insignificant. When you are doubting or in a spiritual slump, every experience you have written down will help lift you back up to where you want to be and help you have the Spirit to guide you.

Meagen J., 17, Virginia



I can strengthen my testimony and become strong against the enemy by praying, daily reading the scriptures, keeping the commandments of God, and always being grateful

to Him. When I keep the commandments, I feel strong against the enemy, and I remember all the good experiences I have had in this gospel. Thus, my testimony increases and becomes unshakable against evil, and it becomes impossible for me to leave this true gospel of Christ. We should always remember to nurture our faith as a small plant, which with our care, grows and becomes strong.

Bárbara M., 16, São Paulo, Brazil



Anything that does not draw us closer to God takes us away from Him. We have no middle ground, no foggy gray area where we can sin a little without suffering spiritual decline. That is why we must repent and come to Christ daily on submissive knees so that we can prevent our bonfires of testimony from being snuffed out by sin."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Spiritual Bonfires of Testimony," Ensign, Nov. 1992, 34.

Your testimony will get stronger gradually with the experiences you have. People rarely receive a testimony overnight. Your testimony will grow as you are willing to serve in the Church, keep the commandments, pray, fast, study the scriptures, attend Church meetings, and listen to others express their testimonies. If you do this, you will be blessed with moments of inspiration that will strengthen your own testimony. Also, don't hesitate to share it with others.

Elder Alberto Aquino, 21, Guatemala
Guatemala City South Mission



At times I have doubted, but thanks to the power of prayer and the power of the Holy Ghost, I have strengthened my testimony that we really are all children of God. Satan will work

hard to get you to doubt your testimony. Pray with all your heart to overcome those thoughts and also to help you remember when He has helped you before. He is always there to listen and help.

Saryn S., 17, Utah

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

----- NEXT QUESTION

"Every time I pray I say the same things. What can I do to make my prayers less repetitive and more meaningful?"

**Send your answer by January 15, 2008 to
New Era, Questions and Answers 1/08
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA
Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org**

The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter

FULL NAME

BIRTH DATE

WARD (or branch)

STAKE (or district)

I grant permission to print response and photo.

SIGNATURE

PARENT'S SIGNATURE (if you are under 18)

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 ZALIG KERSTFEEST * MERRY CHRISTMAS * MALIGAYANG PASKO
 JOYEUX NOËL * 聖誕快樂 * FRÖHE WEIHNACHTEN * GOD JUL
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JOY TO THE WORLD

The Best Christmas Gifts

... are those that come from the heart and build our faith.

Christmastime is a season of gift giving, in memory of the gifts given by the Wise Men to the Christ child and the gift Christ gave us in the Atonement.

Excitement is in the air as we anticipate giving and receiving gifts. Gifts come in all sizes and shapes, but it seems that the best gifts are those that can't be wrapped: gifts of service, family, faith, and testimony.

Enjoy the following memories from our readers of gifts given and received.

Simple reminders. The best gift I have ever received came from my grandmother and consists of two items:

a pillowcase and a necklace with a locket. Although they are simple items, they mean a lot to me. My name is written on the pillowcase with glow-in-the-dark letters, and below my name it reads, "Did you think to pray?" Whenever I have jumped into bed without praying, the glow-in-the-dark words remind me to kneel and pray. The locket holds two pictures: one of me and one of the Savior. While the pillowcase reminds me to pray at home, the locket reminds me to be like the Savior at school and other places I go.

Paige I., Utah

First Presidency devotional.

One of my favorite Christmas experiences took place when I had been a member of the Church for a year and a half. I listened to the First Presidency Christmas devotional. It's always great to hear from the prophet, but during the Christmas season it was especially fantastic.

As we sat in the chapel and listened to the prophet's words, we felt the Spirit very strongly. His words were meaningful, and I was able to better understand the true spirit of Christmas and the importance of loving our neighbors and rendering service.

Even more important, my testimony of Jesus Christ grew stronger that day.

When I was a child, I always got the gifts I wanted on Christmas, but I have never received a better gift than hearing from a prophet that Jesus Christ lives and that this is His true Church.

Alvaro M., Uruguay

Homemade card. I don't earn much money, so I make the gifts I give to people. The best Christmas gift I have ever given was a card made by my hands. It was fun because I knew I was making it for someone I love. I used items around the house such as thread, needles, fabric, and card supplies.

Cassie W., Washington

Paper stars. I am half Thai and half American. I spent three years living in Laos, next to Thailand. For the first two years we were in Laos, my parents hired a *pileang*, or nanny, named Rojana, who took good care of me. Since she was Buddhist, I didn't expect a gift from her at Christmas.

On Christmas morning I found a jar filled with at least a hundred tiny paper stars, folded so they were three-dimensional. They were blue and pink and glittery. Rojana had no money to buy me anything, so she spent hours folding those stars for a child who wasn't her own.

It was a wonderful Christmas gift, a gift of time and dedication.

Faye H., Virginia

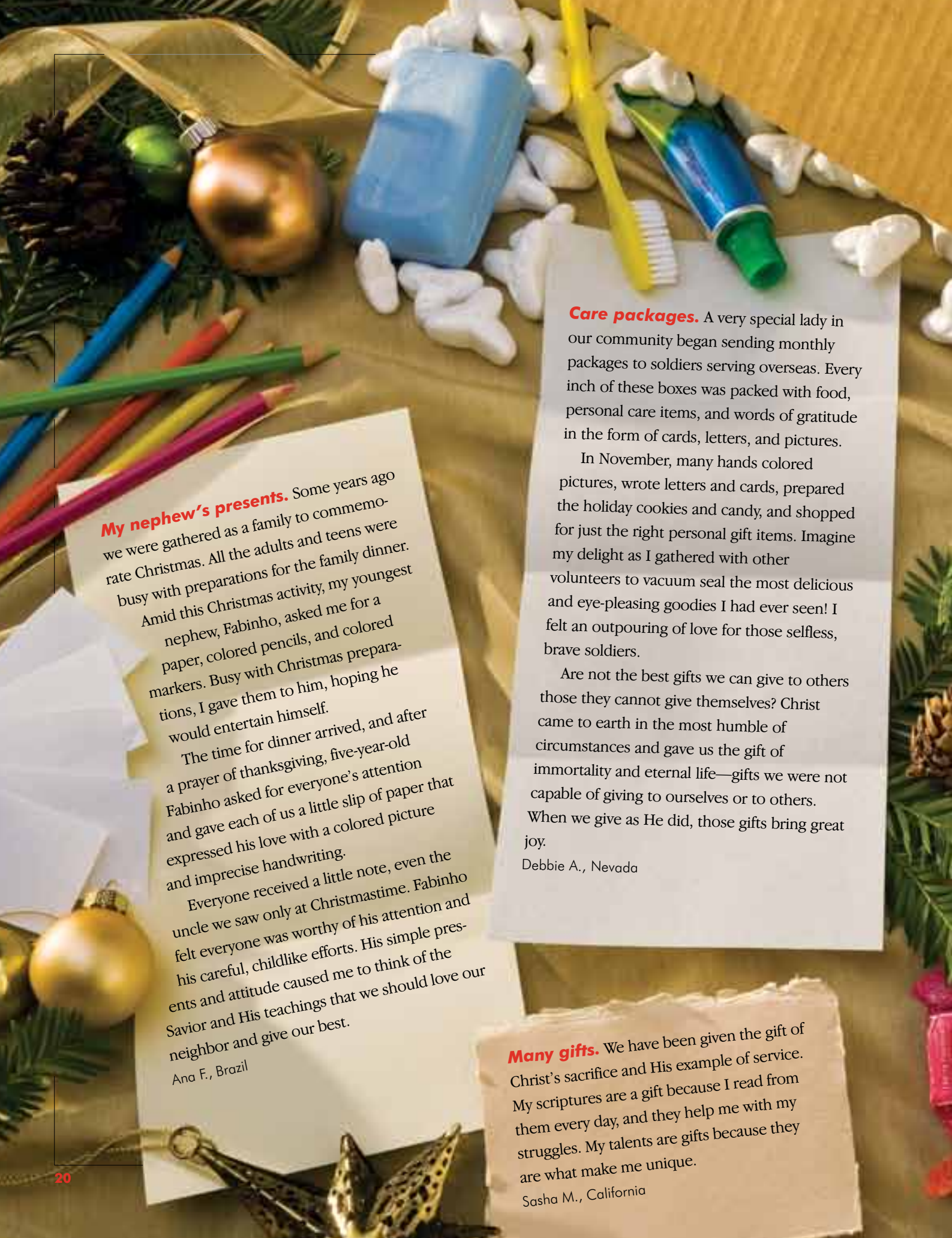
Christmas as a family.

Before I joined the Church, I thought that Christmas was just a time when people wore new clothes and shoes and when there were colored, blinking lights. But one December after I joined the Church, I received a letter and a card from the missionary who baptized me. Among his many words, the following stood out to me: "Christmas is a day when we can be with our families to have a beautiful dinner and to eat together." It was a short sentence, but it had great significance to me.

That day I called everyone in my family to see if they could all come to a great Christmas dinner. Many were surprised because we had never celebrated Christmas as a family before, but they all accepted the invitation. My sisters and I worked hard so that everything would turn out right for our first family dinner. Everything was simple, but my mother was very happy, and everyone was excited to be together.

That Christmas was the happiest one I had ever had, and it was made possible by a simple card and letter reminding me that Christmas is a time to celebrate the birth of the Savior with my family. We have celebrated Christmas as a family ever since.

Gedalva S., Brazil



My nephew's presents. Some years ago we were gathered as a family to commemorate Christmas. All the adults and teens were busy with preparations for the family dinner.

Amid this Christmas activity, my youngest nephew, Fabinho, asked me for a paper, colored pencils, and colored markers. Busy with Christmas preparations, I gave them to him, hoping he would entertain himself.

The time for dinner arrived, and after a prayer of thanksgiving, five-year-old Fabinho asked for everyone's attention and gave each of us a little slip of paper that expressed his love with a colored picture and imprecise handwriting.

Everyone received a little note, even the uncle we saw only at Christmastime. Fabinho felt everyone was worthy of his attention and his careful, childlike efforts. His simple presents and attitude caused me to think of the Savior and His teachings that we should love our neighbor and give our best.

Ana F., Brazil

Care packages. A very special lady in our community began sending monthly packages to soldiers serving overseas. Every inch of these boxes was packed with food, personal care items, and words of gratitude in the form of cards, letters, and pictures.

In November, many hands colored pictures, wrote letters and cards, prepared the holiday cookies and candy, and shopped for just the right personal gift items. Imagine my delight as I gathered with other volunteers to vacuum seal the most delicious and eye-pleasing goodies I had ever seen! I felt an outpouring of love for those selfless, brave soldiers.

Are not the best gifts we can give to others those they cannot give themselves? Christ came to earth in the most humble of circumstances and gave us the gift of immortality and eternal life—gifts we were not capable of giving to ourselves or to others. When we give as He did, those gifts bring great joy.

Debbie A., Nevada

Many gifts. We have been given the gift of Christ's sacrifice and His example of service. My scriptures are a gift because I read from them every day, and they help me with my struggles. My talents are gifts because they are what make me unique.

Sasha M., California

Gift of memories. My parents were struggling to start a new business the year I was 15, and money was scarce in our family. They believed in making the best of difficult circumstances, so we took a day trip to the land my dad was leasing to cut an evergreen desert bush for our Christmas tree and to enjoy a winter picnic together in the snow with homemade chili and hot chocolate.

My two sisters and I decided to put our money together to buy Mom and Dad something to lift their spirits. We bought a photo album and supplies, went home, and filled it with family pictures, starting with their wedding portrait. We had a wonderful time laughing and reminiscing together as we put our favorite photos in the album. We each had one small present to open on Christmas morning, but it didn't matter when we watched our parents' eyes light up as they opened their gift. It was a memorable Christmas filled with love, laughter, and unity.

Sally O., Utah

Gift on the doorstep. I remember the first Christmas my family had when we moved to Australia. I was only seven or eight years old. When we woke up Christmas morning, we were delighted by the gifts our parents had brought with them to Australia. But we were in for a greater surprise. Outside our house on that Christmas morning was a sack of goodies! To this day we don't know who brought it, and although I don't remember every gift in the sack, I will always remember the feelings of peace and happiness that washed over me and my family. The sweet sack of goodies taught me a precious lesson—anonymous service brings joy to our souls.

Elder Vasu Nephi Chetty, New York New York
South Mission

Adoption. Just before Christmas of 2004 we heard about a little girl who needed to be adopted. All of us children put on our Christmas wish list that we wanted a little sister. On December 11, our wishes came true when my younger sister came to live with us. That is the best Christmas gift I have ever had.

Carolyn R., Arizona



"The spirit of Christmas is the spirit of love and of generosity and of goodness. It illuminates the picture window of the soul, and we look out upon the world's busy life and become more inter-

ested in people than in things."
President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "The Precious Gift," First Presidency Christmas Devotional, December 3, 2006.

Living Christmas card.

When I served as a missionary in Brazil, all of our appointments fell through on Christmas night, so I suggested to my companion, "Let's be a live Christmas card and visit our neighbors!" To my surprise, we were well received at every house. As we sang the wonderful hymns of Christmas and read their corresponding scriptures, I felt something extraordinary and profound. I understood more fully the love of the Savior, and I could see tears in the eyes of our neighbors who before had been so suspicious of us. After we returned home and had our dinner, I recorded the following in my journal: "Tonight we shared the birth of the King of kings with our neighbors. The Spirit magnified us and united us for eternity."
 Nivaldo P., Brazil

Christmas away from home. My favorite gift was my first Christmas away from home, when my parents, sister, and I went to visit my brother and his family.

We were used to family Christmases at our house, but this year my other siblings were going elsewhere, and we decided to visit my brother, Josh, and his family because they couldn't come home. I wasn't sure what to expect, and I thought that if we weren't home for Christmas, it wouldn't be fun. It seemed that Christmas just wouldn't be the same. My parents, sister, and I had already opened our presents to each other before we left home.

When my brother picked us up at the airport, my four-year-old niece, Kialeey, started to sing Christmas songs, and I started to feel better. On Christmas morning I enjoyed watching the faces of my nieces and nephews light up as they opened their presents. It was nice, instead of focusing on what I got, to look at others opening their presents and to feel their joy.
 Hannah S., Montana

O EVANGELHO SEGUNDO
MATEUS



Gift of baptism.

My companion and I had been teaching a 14-year-old girl named Martha, and she was nearly ready for baptism and confirmation. We had a few more lessons to teach, and she needed to stop working on Sundays so she could come to church. She loved what she was learning and believed it, but she worked for her aunt and was too young to get any other job. Martha struggled with the decision, so we taught her the blessings of the Sabbath day and encouraged her to pray.

Christmas Eve was a rainy day, and when it was almost time to go home, we felt we should stop by and say hello to Martha. Almost before we knocked on the door, she came running out and hugged us, jumping up and down with enthusiasm. She said, "I don't have to work on Sundays anymore! I'm coming to church! I'm going to get baptized!" Even the rain seemed wonderful after that. Christmas Eve seemed like the perfect time to see someone make the decision to devote her life to Christ. We were two of the happiest missionaries you've ever seen.

Erin B., Utah

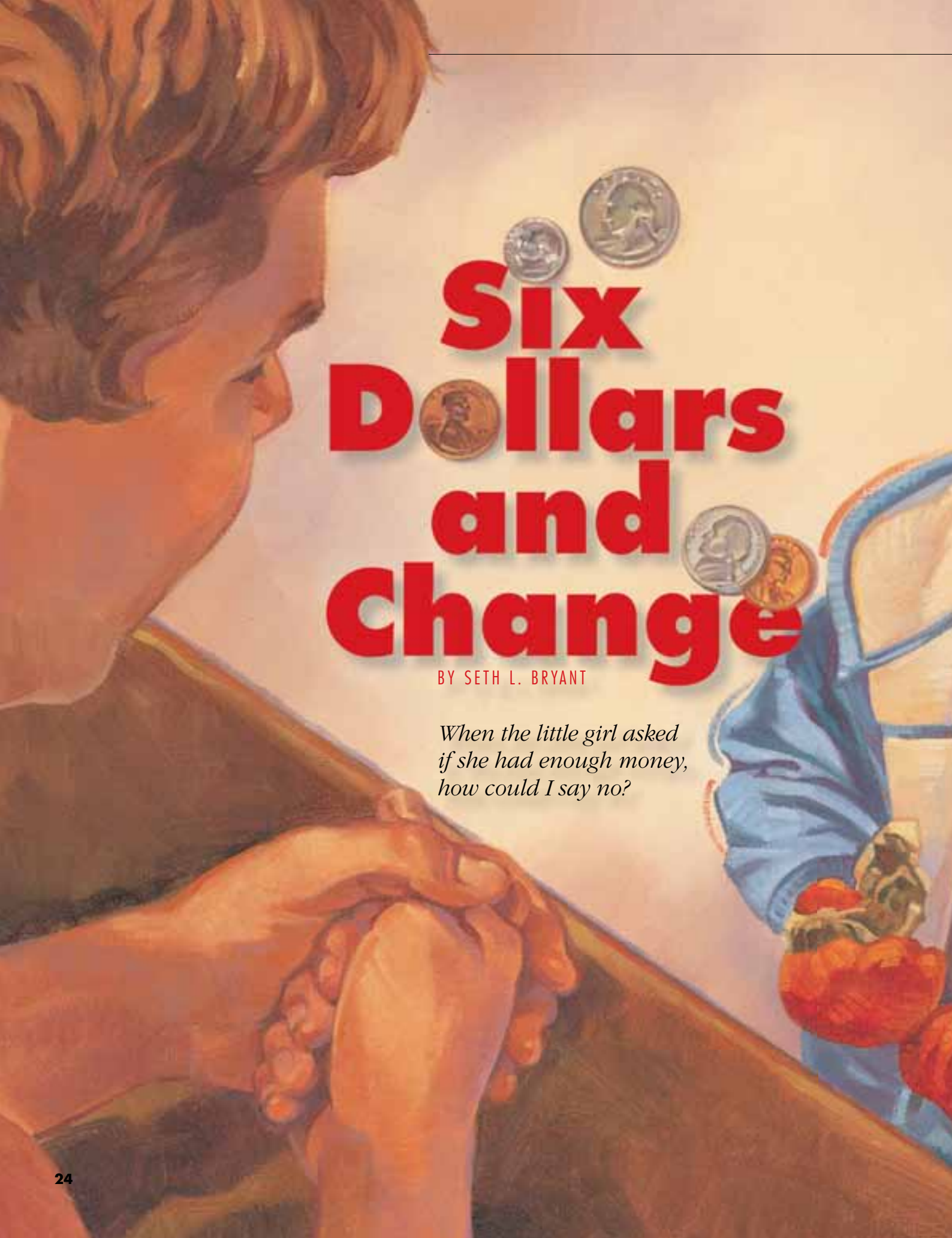
Family. The best Christmas gift I ever received was when all of my brothers and sisters, my dad, and I were together for the first time in years. I love my family more than anything in the world, and it made my dad so happy, which made me happy.

Heather R., Utah

Gift of health. In October we heard the shocking news that our beloved stake president had suffered a heart attack and was in a coma. As the weeks passed, members of our stake prayed earnestly for him. The doctors were very concerned, but then he came out of his coma and drastically improved. He lives in my ward, and one Sunday before Christmas I walked into the chapel and was surprised to see him sitting on the stand. After the speakers gave their talks, the stake president came to the pulpit and told us that he could feel the strength of our prayers. As I looked at him, tears streaming down my cheeks, I realized his return to health was a great Christmas present for all of us.

Katie B., Washington **NE**

Want to learn more about gift giving? Read "Giving with Joy" Ensign, Dec. 1982, by Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, at www.lds.org. Click on "Gospel Library."



Six Dollars and Change

BY SETH L. BRYANT

*When the little girl asked
if she had enough money,
how could I say no?*



ILLUSTRATED BY DILEEN MARSH

It was December 23rd. The mall was dead after an exhausting day. My legs ached after walking the aisles all day at the music store where I worked.

My heart was warmed by the true spirit of Christmas evidenced by the light and laughter dancing in people's eyes as they searched for gifts to show their love to those they adore.

I had also discovered the joy of giving. My only problem was I didn't like shopping. Why was I working at the mall, then? The employee's discount helped.

After the metal gate was partway down, signaling that we were closed, I got out the CDs I had selected for my brother and sister. I had tucked away the exact amount. It was the last of my money until my next paycheck. The money, \$26 and change, was all I had and all I needed.

Just as I was about to complete my transaction, a little girl walked in. She was so little she had no need to duck under the metal gate.

I put down my CDs and asked, "Can I help you?"

She explained that her little brother wanted a popular cartoon video for Christmas, but all the stores were sold out.

"Well," I said, "you're in luck."

**Offering
this
little girl**

**the last of my
Christmas money
reminded me of the
joy that awaits us
when we sacrifice
unselfishly like
Christ did.**

Her face brightened as she exclaimed, “You mean you have one?”

It was always a fulfilling thing for me to take the customer right to the item they had been searching for. Straight to the video we went.

She saw it and ran toward it before I had a chance to get it. “This is the one I’ve looked for!” Carefully she turned the video over, looking at the cartoon figures on the back. It was then that I saw the price: \$24.99.

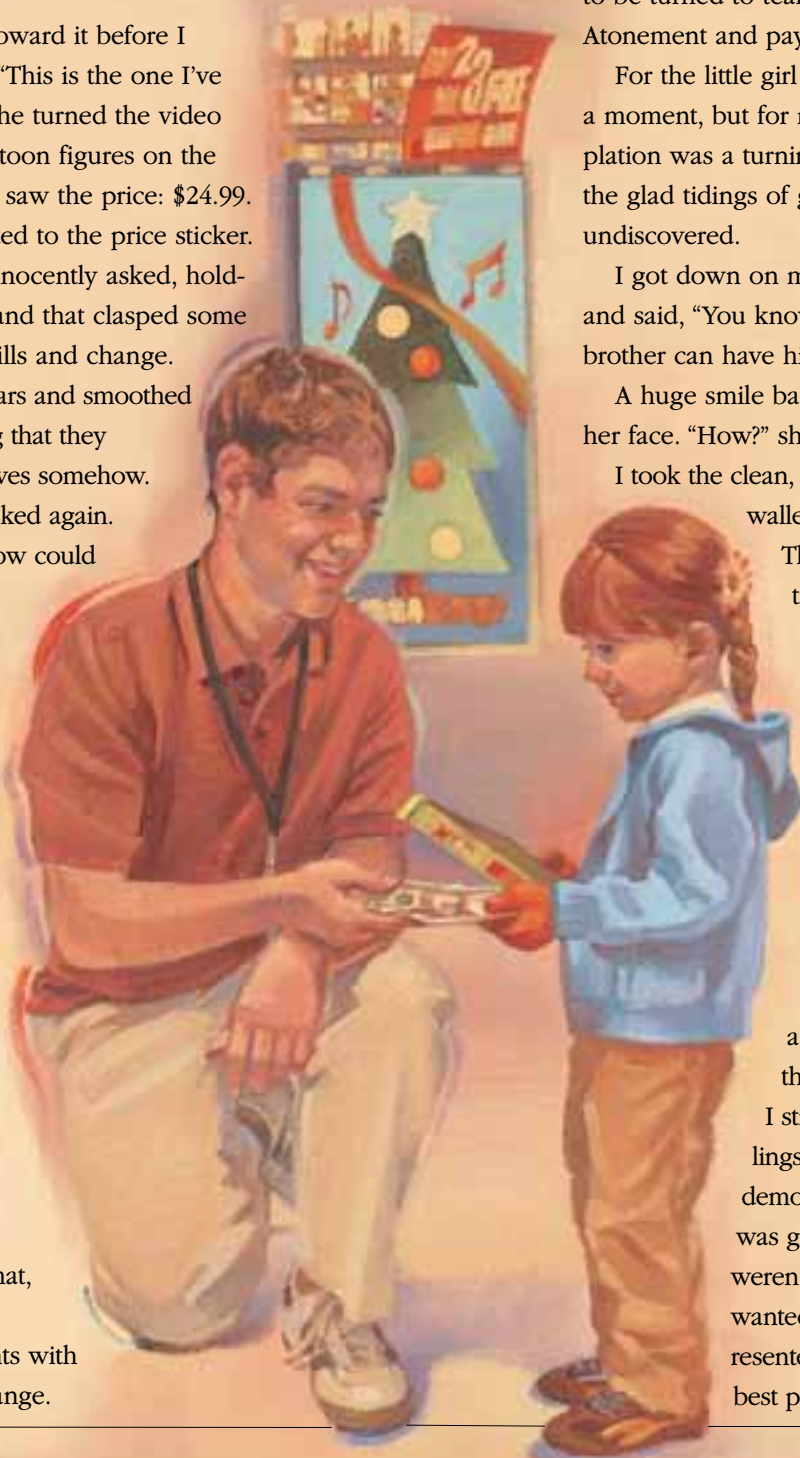
Her eyes also migrated to the price sticker. “Is this enough?” she innocently asked, holding out her mittened hand that clasped some very crumpled dollar bills and change.

I took the warm dollars and smoothed them out slowly, hoping that they would multiply themselves somehow.

“Is it enough?” she asked again. I didn’t say anything. How could I tell her?

Large tears welled up in her eyes as she realized why I kept silent. Discouragement washed over her face. With a sigh she asked, “What can I buy with this much?”

In the store there was no gift that six dollars and some change could buy—trust me; I looked. The only option, if she was to have her video, was for me to help her pay for it. Yet, if I did that, I would then be in her predicament: no presents with only six dollars and change.



A scripture came to my mind: “Knowest thou the condescension of God?” (1 Nephi 11:16). In my mind, I envisioned Christ descending from His heavenly throne, causing the tears of our shortcomings to be turned to tears of joy through His Atonement and payment of our deficit.

For the little girl it may have only been a moment, but for me that time of contemplation was a turning point. I saw a level of the glad tidings of great joy that I had left undiscovered.

I got down on my knees, at her level, and said, “You know, there is a way your brother can have his movie.”

A huge smile banished all sorrow from her face. “How?” she asked.

I took the clean, crisp \$20 bill from my wallet and handed it to her.

Through my new perception, I happily and thankfully watched her skip to the counter. Already on my knees, I took the opportunity to thank Heavenly Father for my Savior and His gift, which He taught me affectionately that night.

Can you put a price on a great understanding of the Atonement? I think not. I still lacked gifts for my siblings, except for some cheap demo CDs the music store was giving away. Though they weren’t what I had originally wanted to give, what they represented to me made them the best presents I’ve ever given. **NE**

THE EXTRA SMILE

"If you want me to learn how to save money, how come you never give me more than I can spend?"



RANDY GLASBERGEN

"I
how c

"Hey! Those are for our home teachers!"



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



RYAN STOKER

"Hi there, little fella, is your father or mother home?"



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

Each year as Christmas approaches, all around us seems filled with light—Christmas lights, candles, lanterns, luminarias. Light in all its forms seems the perfect representation of Christ and a way to celebrate His birth.

The scriptures are full of references to Jesus Christ our Savior as the light of the world. Light represents the truths of the gospel, especially the great truth that our Lord and Savior atoned for us and is the centerpiece of our spiritual lives.

As the Savior appeared, in a marvelous scene, to those living in the New World, He said, “And behold, I am the light and the life of the world;



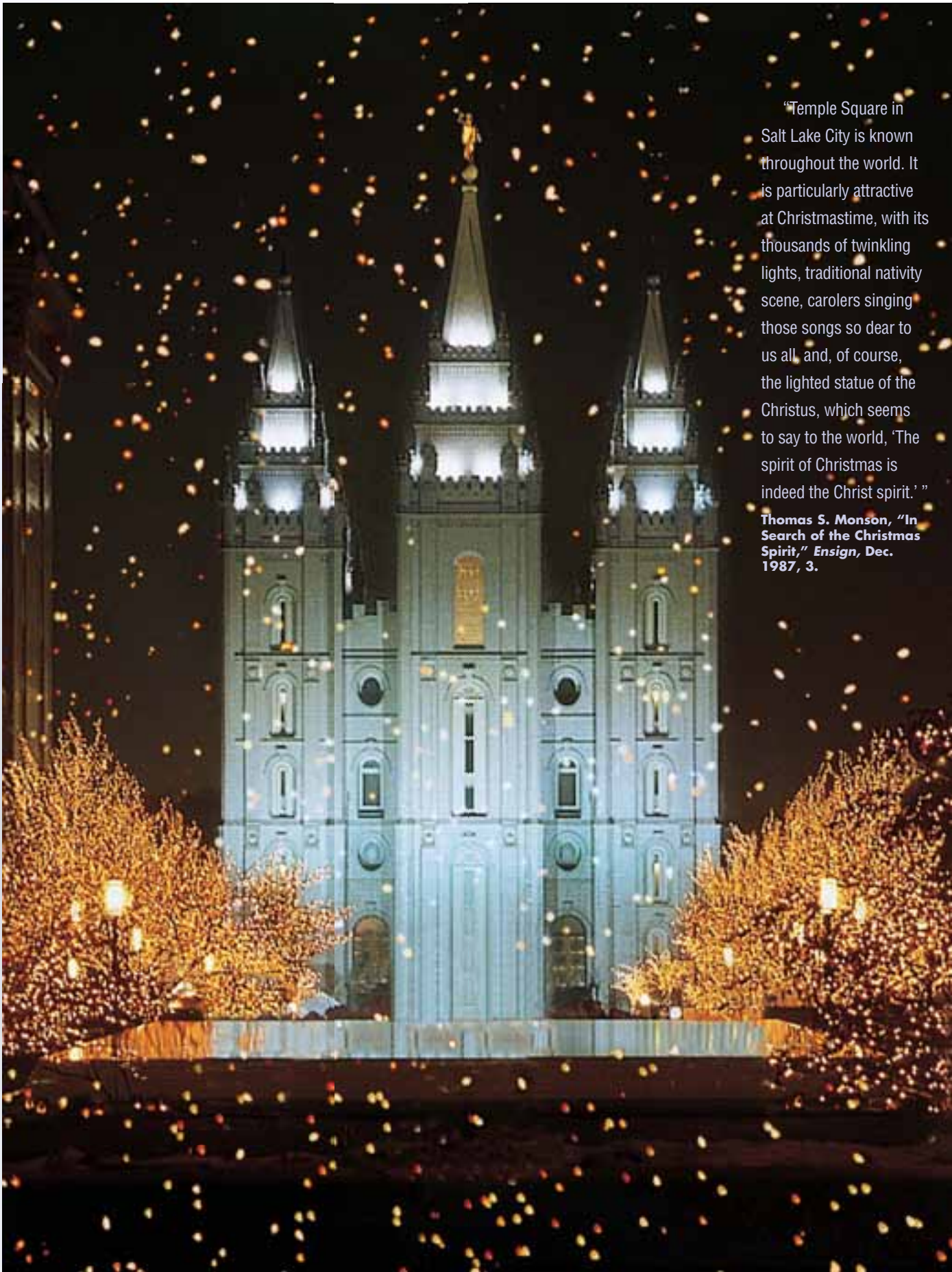
THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

The Christmas season is filled with symbols of brightness and hope—for a good reason.

BY JANET THOMAS
Church Magazines



“If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light” (Luke 11:36).



“Temple Square in Salt Lake City is known throughout the world. It is particularly attractive at Christmastime, with its thousands of twinkling lights, traditional nativity scene, carolers singing those songs so dear to us all, and, of course, the lighted statue of the Christus, which seems to say to the world, ‘The spirit of Christmas is indeed the Christ spirit.’ ”

Thomas S. Monson, “In Search of the Christmas Spirit,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1987, 3.



“Now, what a wonderful season this is, this Christmas season. All of the Christian world, while not understanding the things that we understand, pauses for a moment and remembers with gratitude the birth of the Son of God.”

Gordon B. Hinckley, “A Season for Gratitude,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1997, 2.



“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness” (John 12:46).



“And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings;

“Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—

“The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things” (D&C 88: 11–13).

“While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light” (John 12:36).



and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning” (3 Nephi 11:11).

In these quotes and scriptures, prophets, artists, and photographers have tried to put into their works and words the essential things we need to know about the Savior at this time of year and always.

We honor the birth of our King, our Savior Jesus Christ, the one who lights the way. As Christ declared to His disciples, “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness” (John 12:46). **NE**





FINDING FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

BY ELDER ROBERT D. HALES
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

When the Savior was born, an angel of the Lord appeared to humble shepherds, announcing, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10–11).

But there is more to the Christmas story than the transcendent miracles of a new star in the sky and the birth of the Christ child in Bethlehem. These marvelous occurrences were the culmination of centuries of prophecy and testimony from prophets of God. Without these prophecies, many may feel justified in not believing these miraculous events. But we have been given many witnesses of the birth, life, and mission of the Savior from prophets in every dispensation. Sacred records give us the prophecies of thousands of years—not only of the first coming of our Savior, but also of the *Second Coming*—a glorious day that will certainly, most assuredly, come.

Believing in the Savior and His mission is so essential that the first principle of the gospel is faith in Jesus Christ (see Articles of

Faith 1:4). What is faith? The Apostle Paul taught that faith “is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). How do we gain evidence of our Savior, whom we have not seen? The scriptures teach us, “To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to *know* that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world. To others it is given to *believe* on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful” (D&C 46:13–14; emphasis added).

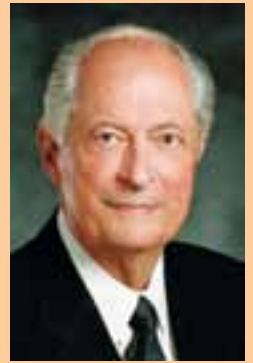
Believing the Prophets

From the beginning of time, prophets have *known* that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, of His mortal mission, and of His Atonement for all mankind.

If we had lived in the days of these prophets, would we have believed on their words? Would we have had faith in the coming of our Savior?

In ancient America, Samuel the Lamanite prophesied that on the night of the Savior’s birth “there [would] be great lights in heaven, . . . insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it was day” (Helaman 14:3).

Many believed Samuel and confessed their sins, repented, and were baptized. But,



How do we gain evidence of our Savior, whom we have not seen? We have been given many witnesses of the birth, life, and mission of the Savior from prophets in every dispensation.

for the most part, the Nephites were blind to the “signs and wonders”; instead of heeding them, the Nephites “depend[ed] upon . . . their own wisdom, saying: Some things [the believers] may have guessed right, . . . but . . . it is not reasonable that such a being as a Christ shall come” (Helaman 16:15–18).

In those days and ours, some naysayers, called anti-Christ, convinced others that there was no need for a Savior and His Atonement. When Samuel’s prophecy was finally fulfilled and there was a “day and a night and a day, as if it were one day” (Helaman 14:4), what joy must have filled the hearts of those who had believed the prophets! “It had come to pass, yea, all things, every whit, according to the words of the prophets” (3 Nephi 1:20). A new star appeared, according to the prophetic promise. Those who believed on the words of the prophets recognized the Savior and were blessed to follow Him.

The prophecies of Christ’s *first* coming were fulfilled “every whit.” As a result, many throughout the world believe that the Savior did come and did live in the meridian of time. But there are still many, many prophecies yet to be fulfilled! We hear living prophets prophesy and testify of Christ’s *Second* Coming. They also witness of the signs and wonders all about us, telling us that Christ will surely come again. Are we choosing to believe on their words? Or, despite their witnesses and warnings, are we “walking in darkness at noon-day” (D&C 95:6), refusing to see by the light of modern prophecy and denying that the Light of the World will return to rule and reign among us?

Finding Faith

Throughout the course of my life, I have known many good and generous people who adhere to Christian values. However, some lack faith that He lives, that He is the Savior of the world, and that His Church has been restored. Because they do not believe in the words of the prophets, they miss the joy of the gospel and its saving ordinances in their lives.

I have a dear friend who, one day in a moment of brotherly tenderness, asked, “Elder Hales, I want to

believe, I’ve always wanted to believe, but how do I do it?”

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). The very fact that you are reading this message, during the Christmas season or any other time of the year, means that you are hearing God’s word. The first step to finding faith in Jesus Christ is to let His word—spoken by the mouth of His servants, the prophets—touch your heart. But it is not enough merely to let those words wash over you, as if they alone could transform you. You must do your part. Hearing requires an active effort—taking seriously what is taught, considering it carefully, studying it out in our minds. As the prophet Enos learned, it means letting others’ testimonies of the gospel “[sink] deep into [our] heart[s]” (Enos 1:3). Let us review Enos’s profound, faith-building experience:

First, Enos heard the gospel truths from his father. Second, he let his father’s teachings about “eternal life, and the joy of the saints” sink deep into his heart (Enos 1:3). Third, he was filled with a desire to know for himself whether these teachings were true and where he, himself, stood before his Maker. To use Enos’s words, “my soul hungered” (Enos 1:4). By having this intense spiritual appetite, Enos qualified himself to receive the Savior’s promise: “Blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost” (3 Nephi 12:6). Fourth, Enos records, “I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens” (Enos 1:4). It wasn’t easy. Faith did not come quickly. In fact, Enos characterized his experience in prayer as a “wrestle which [he] had before God” (Enos 1:2). But faith did come. By the power of the Holy Ghost he did receive a witness for himself.

We cannot find Enos-like faith without our own wrestle before God in prayer. I testify that the reward is worth the effort. If you do these things sincerely and unceasingly, the words Christ spoke to His disciples will be fulfilled in your



We cannot find Enos-like faith without our own wrestle before God in prayer. The words Christ spoke to His disciples will be fulfilled in your life: “Ask, and it shall be given you.”

life: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7).

Gaining Strength through Faith

Once we find the beginnings of our faith in Jesus, our Heavenly Father allows for our faith to be strengthened. This occurs in many ways, including through the experience of adversity. Our faith is acquired through prayer, with a sincere desire to draw close to God and trust in Him to bear our burdens and give us answers to life’s unexplained mysteries of the purpose of life: Where did we come from? Why are we here on earth in mortality? And where are we going after our mortal sojourn on earth?

When the challenges of mortality come, and they come for all of us, it may seem hard

to keep believing. At these times, only faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement can bring us peace, hope, and understanding. Only faith that He suffered for our sakes will give us the strength to endure to the end. When we gain this faith, we experience a mighty change of heart, and, like Enos, we become stronger and begin to feel a desire for the welfare of our brothers and sisters. We pray for them, that they too will be strengthened through faith on the Atonement of our Savior.

Let us consider a few of these prophetic witnesses of the effects of the Atonement in our lives. As we do, I invite you to let them sink deep into your heart and fill whatever hunger may be in your soul.

“And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father

In the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were visited by the Savior and testified, “We saw the Lord . . . and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah.”



and the Son, saying: I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, . . . that as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed” (Moses 5:9).

Ammon witnessed, “Behold, I have seen my Redeemer, and he shall come forth, and be born of a woman, and he shall redeem all mankind who believe on his name” (Alma 19:13).

And finally, Joseph Smith—as a 14-year-old boy—exercised unwavering faith and followed James’s direction to “ask of God” (James 1:5). God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to him and gave him instructions. How glorious was this First Vision to the first prophet of this last dispensation! Sixteen years later in the Kirtland Temple, he was visited by the Savior again and testified, “We saw the Lord . . . and his

voice was the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying: I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 110:2–4).

To all those whose souls are hungering for faith, I invite you “to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written” (Ether 12:41). Let their witness that the Savior gave His life for you sink deep into your heart. Seek a witness of this truth through the Holy Ghost in prayer, and then see your faith strengthened as you joyfully meet the challenges of this mortal life and prepare for life eternal.

Jesus Christ did come. He did live. And He will come again. That is a wonderful truth to carry in our hearts at Christmas and all year long. **NE**



DETAIL FROM THE DESIRES OF MY HEART, BY WALTER RANE, COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART; JESUS CHRIST APPEARS TO THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH AND OLIVER COWDERY, BY WALTER RANE, COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART

Light of Christ

The Light of Christ “proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space.” It is “the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed” (D&C 88:12–13; see also verses 6–11). This power is an influence for good in the lives of all people (see John 1:9; D&C 93:2). In the scriptures, the Light of Christ is sometimes called the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, or the Light of Life.

The Light of Christ should not be confused with the Holy Ghost. It is not a personage, as the Holy Ghost is. Its influence leads people to find the true gospel, be baptized, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (see John 12:46; Alma

26:14–15).

Conscience is a manifestation of the Light of Christ, enabling us to judge good from evil. The prophet Mormon taught: “The Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God. . . . And now, my brethren, seeing that ye know the light by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ, see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge ye shall also be judged” (Moroni 7:16, 18).

(See *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference*, which you can read online at lds.org in the Gospel Library.) **NE**

WRITE AWAY!

Have you ever had a father's blessing or other priesthood blessing? Maybe you've had one at the beginning of a new school year, or when you were going away from home for a time. The First Presidency has encouraged fathers to give these types of blessings to their children. We'd love to hear from you about occasions on which your father or other priesthood holder has given you a blessing.

How did your blessing help you? How did it strengthen your testimony? How did it strengthen your relationship not only with your earthly father but also with your Heavenly Father? Send your responses to us at:

New Era, Father's Blessing
50 E. North Temple St.,
Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT
84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org

However, please be wise. Do not write about sacred, personal experiences that call attention to you or the person giving the blessing.

“As we seek Christ, as we find Him, as we follow Him, we shall have the Christmas spirit, not for one fleeting day each year, but as a companion always.”

Thomas S. Monson, “In Search of the Christmas Spirit,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1987, 5.

A Balancing Act

Killian Stephens has found just the right balance for her life. A ballet dancer from San Rafael, California, Killian recently became the first ballerina to receive the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts Silver Award. She was presented a cash award by world-famous ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov and extended a full scholarship to the University of Arizona. Killian has also earned her Young Womanhood Recognition Award.

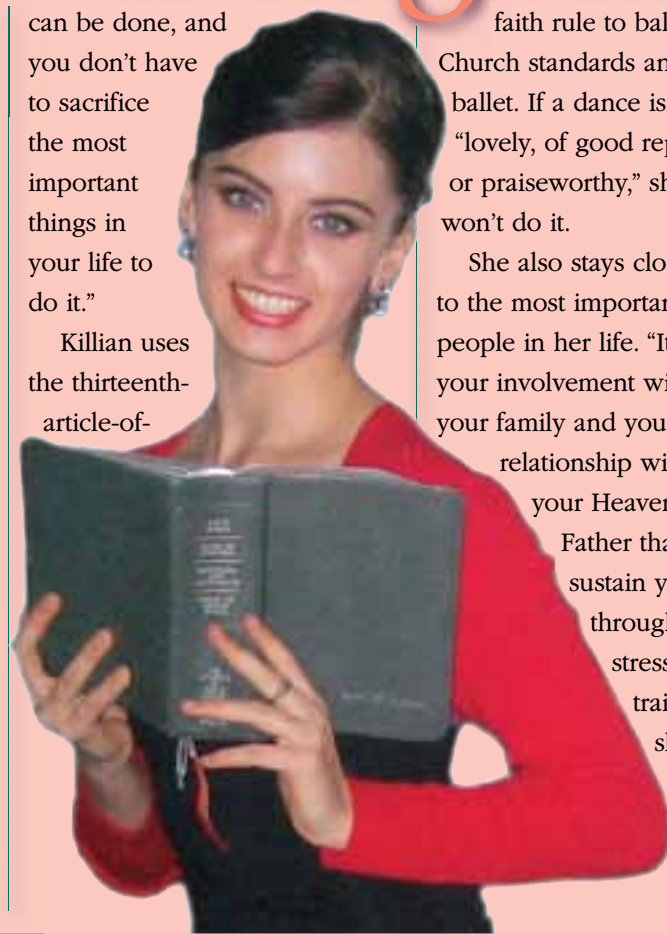
“It takes a lot of commitment to do all of the things you need to do as an active member of the Church and keep a rigorous training schedule,” she says. “But it

can be done, and you don't have to sacrifice the most important things in your life to do it.”

Killian uses the thirteenth-article-of-

faith rule to balance Church standards and ballet. If a dance isn't “lovely, of good report, or praiseworthy,” she won't do it.

She also stays close to the most important people in her life. “It is your involvement with your family and your relationship with your Heavenly Father that will sustain you through the stresses of training,” she says.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF KILLIAN STEPHENS

People in

Joseph Smith—History

BY BARBARA PEARSON

O T S I T A B Z
A L U C Y E M M A
N Q I N O R O M L
T D A V I D B J V
H J N P E A X O I
O A H A R R I S N
N M O W H A L E Y
B E J R E T E P H
K S T M U R Y H C

Hidden above are the names of 14 people mentioned in Joseph Smith—History. Find them by reading forward, backward, diagonally, or vertically. The clues below will help you.

_____ Mack Smith and _____ Smith Sr. were his parents (v. 4).

Two of his brothers were _____ and _____ (v. 4).

An angel named _____ visited Joseph several times (v. 33).

Isaac _____ didn't want his daughter _____ to marry Joseph (v. 57–58).

_____ Cowdery wrote as Joseph translated the Book of Mormon (v. 66).

Martin _____ took copies of the characters from the Book of Mormon to Professor Charles _____ (vv. 61, 64).

John the _____ gave Joseph the Aaronic Priesthood. _____, _____, and _____ gave him the Melchizedek Priesthood (v. 72).



Christmas on Temple Hill

Teaming up with children from the Primary, the young women and young men of the Loomis Third Ward in the Rocklin California Stake participated in the first annual Christmas on Temple Hill at the Sacramento California Temple. The young choir was nearly 50 strong and performed a number of Christmas hymns.

Young men and women from the ward even took part as guest conductors for several songs. Other youth accompanied the singers with choir bells, guitar, flute, and clarinet. After the performance, the crowd of over 100 gathered in the chapel adjacent to the temple to sing hymns, watch a Christmas video on the Nativity, and enjoy refreshments.

One of the many friends in the community to attend who is not a member of the Church described the evening as a heartwarming “exhibit of the true meaning of Christmas.”

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE LOOMIS THIRD WARD, ROCKLIN CALIFORNIA STAKE

A Giving Christmas



BY DEBORAH TOLLEY SHATTO

My ward was providing Christmas for a needy family, but all the while I was wondering who could be more needy than my family.

Christmas was just two weeks away. We had just moved to Moab, Utah, and our family of 11 was living in a three-bedroom trailer without utilities. My parents' company had gone bankrupt, and there was no back pay. The situation was dismal, to say the least.

My singles ward was planning a service project called "The 12 Days of Christmas." The bishops in the stake had prayed and selected a family for us to help for 12 days. Considering my family's situation, I was disappointed that no one had offered to help us. I agreed to buy a gift for a boy in the family, but I couldn't help but wonder what my own brothers would get for Christmas.

The day came for me to purchase a gift for this boy, and I wanted to get him something special. I decided to go to the local department store to see what toys were popular. After 30 minutes I was getting discouraged because no toys seemed just right for the child.

Then a young boy came into the store. He was about the right age, and his appearance suggested that his family was probably struggling financially. I noticed the thrill on his face as he came across a train set. I knew I had found my gift.

As this little boy's brother came into the store to get him, I realized that this was the boy I was buying the gift for. I knew this was Heavenly Father's way of telling me that the stake had picked the right family to serve. I was glad that I had agreed to help them rather than



ILLUSTRATED BY DULLEEN MARSH

I was happy to give. And my family also received great blessings. I realized that Heavenly Father knows our needs and blesses us the most when we put others first.

put my own needs first. But I had no idea that more blessings awaited my family.

My father found another job a couple of days before Christmas, and my parents managed to get a small gift for each child. And things were about to get even better.

The day before Christmas, a brother in

the ward called the bishop and offered to rent a house to a needy family. It was a large, five-bedroom home with the utilities already working, and best of all, he didn't expect rent until the next month. The bishop told us about the house, and we moved in that very morning.

Around the corner from the house was a little bar. Someone there noticed us moving in and was touched by our situation. He started collecting donations and brought over a mug filled with cash from perfect strangers.

Another miracle occurred when my father left work for the night. The bosses were passing out Christmas bonuses, but my dad had only been there for two days, so he assumed he wouldn't get anything. He started to leave, and they said they had something for him. He was surprised to see that each of the men had given up part of their bonuses to share with our family. His company matched the donations. My dad was humbled by their generosity.

That evening, I helped drop off the gifts for our service project. When I got home, my mother told me about the mug of cash and the bonus from work. She had just finished when we heard horns honking. We ran outside and, to our further amazement, dozens of gifts decorated our lawn. We were touched and humbled by the love of strangers for our family. What began as a very meager Christmas had become, instead, a Christmas that we would never forget.

Later, as I thought about the events of the previous month, I realized that Heavenly Father knows each of us. He knows our needs, and He often uses others to meet those needs. But He blesses us the most when we put others first. When I sacrificed my family's needs to help another family, my family was blessed more than I could have imagined. **NE**





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Up in Smoke, Nov, 12

FELLOWSHIP

Good Question, Trent, *Alex LaVelle*, Dec, 12

Name on the List, A, *Sedley Parkinson*, Nov, 30

Few Extra Inches, A, *Rachel R. Stephenson*, Jun, 22

Finding Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, *Robert D. Hales*, Dec, 32

Five M's of Missionary Work, The, *Thomas S. Monson*, Mar, 42

Food for Thought, *Andrea Cartwright*, May, 44

For a Burnt Offering, *Joseph Ray Brillantes*, Sep, 40

FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

Real Confidence, Jan, 8

FORGIVENESS

Forgiving My Father, Aug, 11

Getting Even, *Amy Weir*, Aug, 43

Q&A (perfectionism), Sep, 14

Forgiving My Father, Aug, 11

Freedom to Dance, The, *Adam C. Olson*, Apr, 28

Friendly Conversation, *Laurie Wagley*, Jul, 45

Friendly Invitation, A, *Chris Larson*, Apr, 41

FRIENDS

Chain Reaction, *Shanna Butler*, Jun, 34

Friendly Invitation, A, *Chris Larson*, Apr, 41

From Friends to Sisters to Companions, *Rebecca Mills and Brad Wilcox*, Mar, 12

Missionary Trio, *Patricia Auxier*, Oct, 34

Q&A (worried about a friend not living gospel standards), Apr, 14

Valued Friends, Feb, 41

FRIENDSHIP

Is Anyone Laughing? *Russell Wilcox*, Feb, 34

To the Point (jealous of friends), Sep, 31

Frogley, Linda

Looking Up, Nov, 45

From Friends to Sisters to Companions, *Rebecca Mills and Brad Wilcox*, Mar, 12

Future Is Now, The, *David A. Edwards*, Sep, 18

G

GENERAL AUTHORITIES

Ordinary Men, Extraordinary

Callings, *Bruce R. McConkie*, Sep, 10
 Get Help! *Carol Ashby*, Nov, 44
 Getting Along, Feb, 9
 Getting Even, *Amy Weir*, Aug, 43
 Gifts to Bring Home from the Mission Field, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Mar, 2
 Gilbride, Kathy M.
 He Understands, Jan, 43
 Girl Called "Nine," A, *Jill B. Adair*, Jan, 44
 Giving Christmas, A, *Deborah Shatto*, Dec, 40
 Glorious Season, A, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Dec, 2
GOALS
 Pulling Together, *Adam C. Olson*, Sep, 32
 Going Somewhere? *Riley M. Lorimer*, Oct, 18
 Good Question, Trent, *Alex LaVelle*, Dec, 12
 Good to Know, *Kong Nhean Serey and Phyllis Gunderson*, Jan, 12
GOOD WORKS (SEE SERVICE)
 Greenhalgh, Eric J.
 Inspired to Bless, Mar, 21
 Gunderson, Phyllis
 Good to Know, Jan, 12
H
 Hafen, Bruce C.
 We've Got to Find Her, *Bruce C. Hafen*, Mar, 32
 Hales, Robert D.
 Finding Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Dec, 32
 Handcarts in Alaska, *Marlene Meyer and Patricia Auxier*, Nov, 18
HAPPINESS
 Q&A (people doing wrong seem to be having fun), Jan, 14
HEALTH
 Fit to Serve, Mar, 35
 Freedom to Dance, The, *Adam C. Olson*, Apr, 28
 Take Care, *Riley M. Lorimer*, Jul, 34
HEAVENLY FATHER
 God the Eternal Father, Dec, 11
 Henrichsen, Kirk B.
 What Did the Golden Plates Look Like? Jul, 28
 Hilton, Peter V.
 I Felt the Power, Oct, 32
 Hinckley, Gordon B.
 Gifts to Bring Home from the Mission Field, Mar, 2
 Glorious Season, A, Dec, 2
 Seek Learning, Sep, 2
 Hitchcock, Russell
 Blocking the Wind, Aug, 44
 Holland, Jeffrey R.
 Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts Unceasingly, Oct, 4
 Holt, Christina
 Sometimes It Rains, Jul, 44

HOLY GHOST
 Coming unto Christ, *Henry B. Eyring*, Apr, 2
 Quest for Spiritual Knowledge, The, *Boyd K. Packer*, Jan, 2
HOME TEACHING
 Knock Again, *Sedley Parkinson*, May, 8
 Two Wisemans, *Matthew Dinger*, Apr, 10
HONESTY (SEE INTEGRITY)
 Honor Earned, An, *Jonathan Perez*, Nov, 45
 How to Prepare to Be a Good Missionary, *M. Russell Ballard*, Mar, 6
HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS
 More or Less, *H. David Burton*, Nov, 2
HUMOR
 Is Anyone Laughing? *Russell Wilcox*, Feb, 34
I
 I Felt the Power, *Peter V. Hilton*, Oct, 32
 I Know Families Can Be Forever, *Moisés Nefi Morales Gonzáles*, Jan, 43
 I Took the Temple with Me, *Cory Keate*, Mar, 18
IDEA LIST
 Beating the Blahs, Apr, 27
 Fit to Serve, Mar, 35
 Getting Along, Feb, 9
 Getting the Most from Your *New Era*, Aug, 12
 Getting the Most Out of Sacramento Meeting, Jun, 13
 Overcoming Temptation, Jan, 23
 Priesthood Power, May, 11
 If a Bug Flies into Your Mouth, *Aaron L. West*, Sep, 24
 If I Had Known at 19, *Roger Terry*, Mar, 54
 If the Savior Stood beside Me, *Sally DeFord*, Aug, 8
ILLNESS
 Girl Called "Nine," A, *Jill B. Adair*, Jan, 44
 What Cathy Knew, *Susan Winters*, Apr, 18
 In His Own Backyard, *Sara Faust*, Feb, 24
 In Royal Courts, *Sara Mason*, Jun, 45
IN TUNE
 If the Savior Stood beside Me, *Sally DeFord*, Aug, 8
 From Father's Arms to Mother's Arms, *Janice Kapp Perry and John V. Pearson*, Dec, 9
 Tender Mercies of the Lord, *Janice Kapp Perry*, Apr, 13
INDIVIDUAL WORTH
 To the Point (jealous of friends), Sep, 31
 Worth of Weeds, The, *Riley M. Lorimer*, May, 12
 Injured and Alone, *Marli Walker*, May, 34

Inside the MTC, *Danielle Nye Poulter*, Mar, 26
 Inspired to Bless, *Eric J. Greenhalgh*, Mar, 21
INSTITUTE
 Future Is Now, The, *David A. Edwards*, Sep, 18
INTEGRITY
 Did You Cheat? *Robert M. Bogardus*, Jul, 6
 Make Your Life a Legacy, *Mervyn B. Arnold*, Jun, 40
 Is Anyone Laughing? *Russell Wilcox*, Feb, 34
J
 Jenkins, Caitlin
 Making Grandpa Proud, Feb, 41
JESUS CHRIST
 Blocking the Wind, *Russell Hitchcock*, Aug, 44
 Coming unto Christ, *Henry B. Eyring*, Apr, 2
 Finding Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, *Robert D. Hales*, Dec, 32
 He Knows the Way (poster), Jul, 17
 Let Him In, Aug, 46
 Light of Christ, Dec, 37
 Q&A (faith in Jesus Christ), Oct, 14
 Recognizing the Savior, *Jade Swartzberg*, Sep, 46
 Savior of All, The (poster), Apr, 17
 Johnson, Hikimai
 Merits of Scouting, The, Apr, 41
JOSEPH SMITH
 God the Eternal Father, Dec, 11
 Of Good Report, *Aubri J. Pope*, Feb, 28
 What Joseph Taught, Dec, 10
JOY
 Rejoice! *Jade Swartzberg*, Aug, 6
 Just a Little Violence? Aug, 40
 Justesen, Alexa
 Long Wait, The, Apr, 32
K
 Kaneva, Maria
 Enduring to the Beginning, Oct, 11
 Keate, Cory
 I Took the Temple with Me, Mar, 18
 Keep Texting from Taking Over, *Russell and Brad Wilcox*, Aug, 30
KINDNESS
 Giving Christmas, A, *Deborah Shatto*, Dec, 40
 Is Anyone Laughing? *Russell Wilcox*, Feb, 34
 Serve It Forward, *Jordan Muhlestein*, Jan, 28
 Knock Again, *Sedley Parkinson*, May, 8
KNOWLEDGE
 Seek Learning, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Sep, 2

Kowallis, Bart J.
 Testing the Truth, Oct, 8
L
LANGUAGE
 Thy Speech Reveals Thee, *L. Tom Perry*, Jul, 2
 Larson, Chris
 Friendly Invitation, A, Apr, 41
 Larson, Kami
 Members Make the Difference, Mar, 62
 LaVelle, Alex
 Good Question, Trent, Dec, 12
 Lead Thou Me On, *Aleena Ricks*, May, 45
LEADERSHIP
 Me? Relief Society President? *Jade Swartzberg*, Nov, 26
 LeDuc, Carolyn J.
 Where Are the Needy? Apr, 8
 Let Him In, Aug, 46
 Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts Unceasingly, *Jeffrey R. Holland*, Oct, 4
 Lifferth, Whitney Holyoak
 My Comfort, Apr, 41
 Light of Christ, Dec, 37
 Light of Truth, The, *Janet Thomas*, Dec, 28
LINE UPON LINE
 Abraham 3:22–23, Sep, 43
 D&C 121:45, Jan, 11
 D&C 4, Mar, 5
 Psalm 24:3–4, Nov, 7
 Tithing and Other Offerings, Apr, 46
 Looking Up, *Linda Frogley*, Nov, 45
 Long Wait, The, *Alexa Justesen*, Apr, 32
 Lorimer, Riley M.
 Fast Enough, Sep, 9
 Going Somewhere? Oct, 18
 Puppet Boys, The, Jan, 24
 Take Care, Jul, 34
 Worth of Weeds, The, May, 12
 Lost, *John D. N. Davidson II*, Nov, 24
 Lost Goat, The, *Matthew B. Pearson*, Jul, 24
 Lundberg, Megan
 That Glorious Feeling, Aug, 45
M
 Mackelprang, Sherrie
 What I Learned from Doing the Dishes, Jun, 30
 Make Your Life a Legacy, *Mervyn B. Arnold*, Jun, 40
 Making Grandpa Proud, *Caitlin Jenkins*, Feb, 41
 Mama's Refrigerator, *Emma E. Sánchez Sánchez*, Feb, 22
MARRIAGE
 To the Point (education or marriage), Sep, 30
 Mason, Sara
 In Royal Courts, Jun, 45
MATERIALISM
 Don't Buy It (poster), Nov, 17

More or Less, *H. David Burton*, Nov, 2

McConkie, Bruce R.
Ordinary Men, Extraordinary Callings, Sep, 10

McKay, David O.
Test of One, The, Aug, 34

McQueen-Nobbs, Jeanette
Remember Me? Feb, 40

Me? A Sister Missionary? *Taryn Salmon*, Mar, 46

Me? Relief Society President? *Jade Swartzberg*, Nov, 26

MEDIA
Just a Little Violence? Aug, 40
To the Point (violent video games), Sep, 30

Members Make the Difference, *Kami Larson*, Mar, 62

Merényi, Viktória
Exemplary Performance, An, Jul, 46

Merits of Scouting, The, *Hikimai Johnson*, Apr, 41

Meservy, Sharrah
Please Take My Pain Away, Sep, 45

Meyer, Marlene, and Patricia Auxier
Handcarts in Alaska, Nov, 18

Mills, Rebecca
From Friends to Sisters to Companions, Mar, 12

Missing the World Cup, *Suzana Alves de Melo*, Jun, 21

Missionary Mail, *Connie Myers*, Mar, 58

MISSIONARY PREPARATION
Fit to Serve, Mar, 35
Gifts to Bring Home from the Mission Field, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Mar, 2

How to Prepare to Be a Good Missionary, *M. Russell Ballard*, Mar, 6

I Took the Temple with Me, *Cory Keate*, Mar, 18

If I Had Known at 19, *Roger Terry*, Mar, 54

Inside the MTC, *Danielle Nye Poulter*, Mar, 26

Me? A Sister Missionary? *Taryn Salmon*, Mar, 46

Missionary Training Center (poster), Mar, 25

Q&A (I want to serve a mission but need stronger testimony), Mar, 22

To the Point (gaining a desire to serve a mission), Mar, 52

Your Call to Serve, *David A. Edwards*, Mar, 14

MISSIONARY SERVICE
For a Burnt Offering, *Joseph Ray Brillantes*, Sep, 40
Make Your Life a Legacy, *Mervyn B. Arnold*, Jun, 40
Me? A Sister Missionary? *Taryn Salmon*, Mar, 46
Soccer or Mission? *Alexandre Machado Vasconcelos*, Jun, 18

Symphony of One, *Richard M. Romney*, Aug, 18

Missionary Trio, *Patricia Auxier*, Oct, 34

MISSIONARY WORK
Book for Brandon, A, *Emilie Everett*, Jun, 45
Chain Reaction, *Shanna Butler*, Jun, 34
D&C 4, Mar, 5
Day in the Life of a Missionary, A, *Adam C. Olson*, Mar, 36
Five M's of Missionary Work, The, *Thomas S. Monson*, Mar, 42
Friendly Conversation, *Laurie Wagley*, Jul, 45
Friendly Invitation, A, *Chris Larson*, Apr, 41
From Friends to Sisters to Companions, *Rebecca Mills and Brad Wilcox*, Mar, 12
Gifts to Bring Home from the Mission Field, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Mar, 2
Lost Goat, The, *Matthew B. Pearson*, Jul, 24
Members Make the Difference, *Kami Larson*, Mar, 62
Missionary Trio, *Patricia Auxier*, Oct, 34
Name on the Tag, The, *John Crespo*, Mar, 63
Pass It Along, *Stephen R. Born*, Oct, 45
To the Point (handling challenging questions), Mar, 53
To the Point (talking to a best friend about the gospel), Mar, 53
Inspired to Bless, *Eric J. Greenhalgh*, Mar, 21
Missionary Mail, *Connie Myers*, Mar, 58
Remember Me? *Jeanette McQueen-Nobbs*, Feb, 40
Sharing Time (poster), May, 7
Three Little Notes, *Iyiewuare Erharuyi Daniel*, Mar, 63
We've Got to Find Her, *Bruce C. Hafen*, Mar, 32
Where Is Your Book of Mormon? *David E. Sorensen*, Feb, 42
Monson, Thomas S.
Five M's of Missionary Work, The, Mar, 42
More or Less, *H. David Burton*, Nov, 2
Morales Gonzáles, Moisés Nefi
I Know Families Can Be Forever, Jan, 43
Muhlestein, Jordan
Serve It Forward, Jan, 28

MUSIC (SEE ALSO IN TUNE)
Exemplary Performance, An, *Viktória Merényi*, Jul, 46
He Understands, *Kathy M. Gilbride*, Jan, 43
In Royal Courts, *Sara Mason*,

Jun, 45
Lead Thou Me On, *Aleena Ricks*, May, 45
Playing a Familiar Tune, *Jade Swartzberg*, Oct, 24
Right on Key, *Danielle Nye Poulter*, May, 24
Singing for Rose, *Nerissa Dawn Cannon*, Apr, 40
Symphony of One, *Richard M. Romney*, Aug, 18

My Battle with Pornography, Jul, 11
My Comfort, *Whitney Holyoak Liffirth*, Apr, 41
My Journey to Faith, *David Dance*, Jun, 44

Myers, Connie
Missionary Mail, Mar, 58

N
Name on the List, A, *Sedley Parkinson*, Nov, 30
Name on the Tag, The, *John Crespo*, Mar, 63
Night of the Test, The, *Lehi L. Cruz*, Sep, 44
Night to Remember, A, *Janet Thomas*, Feb, 30
No Match on Sunday, *David M. Smith*, May, 45
No One Stands Alone, *Janet Thomas*, Sep, 26
Not Even Once, *Shanna Butler*, Aug, 26
Nuckols, Cameron
Last Chapter, The, Aug, 45

O
Oaks, Dallin H.
Where Will It Lead? Aug, 2

OBEDIENCE
Q&A (rules vs. agency), Nov, 14
Testimony of Prophets, A, *Claudio R. M. Costa*, Oct, 28
Too Busy to Care, *Annie Valentine Tintle*, Jun, 8
Waves of Deception, *R. Conrad Schultz*, Nov, 40
You Can't Work on Sundays? *Teri Eddy Topham*, Sep, 36

Of Good Report, *Aubri J. Pope*, Feb, 28

Olson, Adam C.
Day in the Life of a Missionary, A, Mar, 36
Freedom to Dance, The, Apr, 28
Pulling Together, Sep, 32
One Special Leader, *Sariah de Barros Ferreira da Silva*, Jan, 42
One Word at a Time, *Timothy M. Wilson*, Oct, 31

ORDINANCES
Simplicity of Symbols, The, *David A. Edwards*, Feb, 10
Ordinary Men, Extraordinary Callings, *Bruce R. McConkie*, Sep, 10
Overcoming Temptation, Jan, 23

P
Packer, Boyd K.
Quest for Spiritual Knowledge, The, Jan, 2
Unseen Power, The, May, 2

Parkinson, Sedley
Knock Again, May, 8
Name on the List, A, Nov, 30
Pass It Along, *Stephen R. Born*, Oct, 45

PATRIARCHAL BLESSINGS
Q&A (learning from my patriarchal blessing), May, 14



PEACE
Peace on Earth (poster), Oct, 17
Pearson, John V., and Janice Kapp Perry
From Father's Arms to Mother's Arms, Dec, 9
Pearson, Matthew B.
Lost Goat, The, Jul, 24
Perez, Jonathan
Honor Earned, An, Nov, 45


PERFECTIONISM
Q&A (perfectionism), Sep, 14
Perry, Janice Kapp
Tender Mercies of the Lord, Apr, 13
Perry, Janice Kapp, and John V. Pearson
From Father's Arms to Mother's Arms, Dec, 9
Perry, L. Tom
Thy Speech Reveals Thee, Jul, 2

PERSEVERANCE
Ponder, Pray, Perform, Persevere, *W. Craig Zwick*, May, 40
Phillips, Lindsey
Sprinting to Success, Nov, 34
Play It Again, Sam, *Janet Thomas*, May, 18
Playing a Familiar Tune, *Jade Swartzberg*, Oct, 24
Please Take My Pain Away, *Sharrah Meservy*, Sep, 45

POETRY
Another Leaf, *Vicki Lynn Giglio*, Feb, 49
At Dawn, *Kara Dixon Houser*, Dec, 49
Escape, *Sherrie Carter*, May, 49
Everyone . . . and I, *Susan St. Pierre*, Oct, 49
Forgotten, The, *Sharman Tullis Gill*, Nov, 49
Imagine, *Adrienne Thomas Erickson*, Aug, 49
New Day, A, *Anita Smith Lisberg*, Sep, 49
Noonday, *Christine Layton*, Jan, 49
Perfect Day, The, *Lara Deppe*, Jun, 49
Simplicity, *Jaana Olsen*, Apr, 49
Summer Steam, *Shawna Simpson*, Jul, 49
To J.E.H. and Many Others, *Peter B. Ball*, Mar, 65
Ponder, Pray, Perform, Persevere,

W. Craig Zwick, May, 40
 Pope, Aubri J.
 Of Good Report, Feb, 28
PORNOGRAPHY
 If a Bug Flies into Your Mouth,
Aaron L. West, Sep, 24
 My Battle with Pornography,
 Jul, 11
POSTER
 Are You Getting the Right
 Message? Aug, 17
 Choose, Jun, 17
 Don't Buy It, Nov, 17
 Dress for Success, Feb, 17
 He Knows the Way, Jul, 17
 How Firm Is Your Foundation?
 Sep, 17
 Joy to the World, Dec, 17
 Missionary Training Center,
 Mar, 25
 Peace on Earth, Oct, 17
 Savior of All, The, Apr, 17
 Sharing Time, May, 7
 What's on Your Mind? Jan, 17
 Poulter, Danielle Nye
 Inside the MTC, Mar, 26
 Right on Key, May, 24
PRAYER
 Crash Course in Prayer, *Andrea
 Cartwright*, Jul, 45
 Injured and Alone, *Marli
 Walker*, May, 34
 Lost, *John D. N. Davidson II*,
 Nov, 24
 Lost on the Ledge, *Nathan
 Waite*, Apr, 24
 Ponder, Pray, Perform,
 Persevere, *W. Craig Zwick*,
 May, 40
 Testing the Truth, *Bart J.
 Kowallis*, Oct, 8
 "This Is Ace," *Ace Stryker*,
 May, 22
PREPAREDNESS
 Save Her! *Patricia Auxier*,
 Sep, 6
 President James E. Faust: A
 Special Witness, Oct, 2
PRIESTHOOD, AARONIC
 Name on the List, A, *Sedley
 Parkinson*, Nov, 30
 Priesthood Power, May, 11
 Unseen Power, The, *Boyd K.
 Packer*, May, 2
PRIESTHOOD BLESSINGS
 Inspired to Bless, *Eric J.
 Greenhalgh*, Mar, 21
 Priesthood Power, May, 11
PRIORITIES
 Are You Getting the Right
 Message? (poster), Aug, 17
 Something Had to Give, *Amelia
 Stone*, Aug, 24
 Too Busy to Care, *Annie
 Valentine Tintle*, Jun, 8
 Prophet on the Earth, A, *Jade
 Swartzberg*, Dec, 6
PROPHETS
 Prophet on the Earth, A, *Jade
 Swartzberg*, Dec, 6

Testimony of Prophets, A,
Claudio R. M. Costa, Oct, 28
 Pulling Together, *Adam C. Olson*,
 Sep, 32
 Puppet Boys, The, *Riley M.
 Lorimer*, Jan, 24
 Put Light in Your Life, *James E.
 Faust*, Jun, 2

 Quest for Spiritual Knowledge,
 The, *Boyd K. Packer*, Jan, 2
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
 People doing wrong seem to
 be having fun, Jan, 14
 My friend seems depressed and
 perhaps suicidal, Feb, 14
 I want to serve a mission but
 need stronger testimony,
 Mar, 22
 Worried about a friend not
 living gospel standards,
 Apr, 14
 Learning from my patriarchal
 blessing, May, 14
 Afraid of falling away, Jun, 14
 Anti-Mormon literature, Jul, 14
 Keeping the Sabbath day holy,
 Aug, 14
 Perfectionism, Sep, 14
 Faith in Jesus Christ, Oct, 14
 Rules vs. agency, Nov, 14
 Strengthening testimony, Dec, 14

REACTIVATION
 Knock Again, *Sedley Parkinson*,
 May, 8
 Reaching for the Top, *Janet
 Thomas*, Jan, 30
 Real Confidence, Jan, 8
 Recognizing the Savior, *Jade
 Swartzberg*, Sep, 46
 Rejoice! *Jade Swartzberg*, Aug, 6
RELIEF SOCIETY
 Me? Relief Society President?
Jade Swartzberg, Nov, 26
 Remember Me? *Jeanette
 McQueen-Nobbs*, Feb, 40
 Remembering Iowa, *Caroline H.
 Benzley*, Jul, 18
 Remington, David
 Answer in Alma, The, May, 46
REPENTANCE
 Coming unto Christ, *Henry B.
 Eyring*, Apr, 2
 Road Rash and Repentance,
Nathan Richardson, Apr, 34
REVERENCE
 Reverencing the Temple, *Paul
 VanDenBerghe*, Feb, 18
 Reverencing the Temple, *Paul
 VanDenBerghe*, Feb, 18
 Richards, H. Bryan
 Windows of Heaven, The,
 Apr, 42
 Richardson, Nathan
 Road Rash and Repentance,
 Apr, 34
 Ricks, Aleena
 Lead Thou Me On, May, 45

Right on Key, *Danielle Nye
 Poulter*, May, 24
 Road Rash and Repentance,
Nathan Richardson, Apr, 34
 Romney, Richard M.
 Brothers, May, 30
 Determined to Serve, Mar, 48
 Symphony of One, Aug, 18

SABBATH DAY
 Missing the World Cup, *Suzana
 Alves de Melo*, Jun, 21
 No Match on Sunday, *David M.
 Smith*, May, 45
 Q&A (keeping the Sabbath day
 holy), Aug, 14
 You Can't Work on Sundays?
Teri Eddy Topham, Sep, 36
SACRAMENT
 Getting the Most Out of
 Sacrament Meeting, Jun, 13
 One Word at a Time,
Timothy M. Wilson, Oct, 31
SACRIFICE
 For a Burnt Offering, *Joseph
 Ray Brillantes*, Sep, 40
 Salmon, Taryn
 Me? A Sister Missionary? Mar, 46
 Sánchez Sánchez, Emma E.
 Mama's Refrigerator, Feb, 22
 Save Her! *Patricia Auxier*, Sep, 6
 Schutz, R. Conrad
 Waves of Deception, Nov, 40
 Scott, Richard G.
 Don't Face the World Alone,
 Feb, 2
SCOUTING
 Cape Town's Record-Setting
 Scout, *Paul VanDenBerghe*,
 Apr, 20
 Honor Earned, An, *Jonathan
 Perez*, Nov, 45
 Merits of Scouting, The,
Hikimai Johnson, Apr, 41
SCRIPTURE STUDY
 Abraham 3:22–23, Sep, 43
 D&C 121:45, Jan, 11
 D&C 4, Mar, 5
 Everyday Scriptures, *Bethany E.
 Walker*, Nov, 46
 I Felt the Power, *Peter V. Hilton*,
 Oct, 32
 Psalm 24:3–4, Nov, 7
SCRIPTURES
 Answer in Alma, The, *David
 Remington*, May, 46
 Where Is Your Book of
 Mormon? *David E. Sorensen*,
 Feb, 42
 Who Are Matthew, Mark, Luke,
 and John? *Janet Thomas*,
 Jan, 19
 Why I Believe the Book of
 Mormon, *Don Searle*, May, 28
 Searle, Don
 Why I Believe the Book of
 Mormon, May, 28
 Seek Learning, *Gordon B.
 Hinckley*, Sep, 2
SEMINARY

I Felt the Power, *Peter V. Hilton*,
 Oct, 32
 Serey, Kong Nhean
 Good to Know, Jan, 12
 Serve It Forward, *Jordan
 Muhlestein*, Jan, 28
SERVICE
 Determined to Serve,
Richard M. Romney, Mar, 48
 Developing an Attitude,
Kimberly Webb, Oct, 46
 Food for Thought, *Andrea
 Cartwright*, May, 44
 Giving Christmas, A, *Deborah
 Shatto*, Dec, 40
 Lost Goat, The, *Matthew B.
 Pearson*, Jul, 24
 Puppet Boys, The, *Riley M.
 Lorimer*, Jan, 24
 Serve It Forward, *Jordan
 Muhlestein*, Jan, 28
 Singing for Rose, *Nerissa Dawn
 Cannon*, Apr, 40
 Where Are the Needy?
Carolyn J. LeDuc, Apr, 8
 Sharing Christmas, *Daiana
 Melina Albornoz Díaz*, Dec, 8
 Shatto, Deborah
 Giving Christmas, A, Dec, 40
 Simplicity of Symbols, The,
David A. Edwards, Feb, 10
 Singing for Rose, *Nerissa Dawn
 Cannon*, Apr, 40
 Six Dollars and Change, *Seth L.
 Bryant*, Dec, 24
 Smith, David M.
 No Match on Sunday, May, 45
 Snow, Lowell, M.
 To Be Together, Jul, 40
 Soccer or Mission? *Alexandre
 Machado Vasconcelos*, Jun, 18
 Something Had to Give, *Amelia
 Stone*, Aug, 24
 Sorensen, David E.
 Where Is Your Book of
 Mormon? Feb, 42
 Sometimes It Rains, *Christina
 Holt*, Jul, 44
SPIRITUALITY
 Don't Face the World Alone,
Richard G. Scott, Feb, 2
 Get Help! *Carol Ashby*, Nov, 44
 Put Light in Your Life, *James E.
 Faust*, Jun, 2
 We've Got to Find Her,
Bruce C. Hafen, Mar, 32
SPIRITUAL GROWTH
 Quest for Spiritual Knowledge,
 The, *Boyd K. Packer*, Jan, 2
 Turnaround, The, *Kayla Casper*,
 Feb, 6
 Sprinting to Success, *Lindsey
 Phillips*, Nov, 34
STANDARDS
 D&C 121:45, Jan, 11
 Night to Remember, A, *Janet
 Thomas*, Feb, 30
 Q&A (people doing wrong
 seem to be having fun),
 Jan, 14
 Q&A (worried about a friend

not living gospel standards),
Apr, 14
Real Confidence, Jan, 8
Thy Speech Reveals Thee,
L. Tom Perry, Jul, 2
Stephenson, Rachel R.
Few Extra Inches, A, Jun, 22
Stoker, Justin
Where Your Heart Is, Oct, 44
Stone, Amelia
Something Had to Give, Aug, 24
Stryker, Ace
"This Is Ace," May, 22
Swartzberg, Jade
Me? Relief Society President?
Nov, 26
Playing a Familiar Tune, Oct, 24
Prophet on the Earth, A, Dec, 6
Recognizing the Savior, Sep, 46
Rejoice! Aug, 6
Swartzberg, Jade, and Shari Whyte
Bringing Abish to Life, Jun, 24
SYMBOLS
Simplicity of Symbols, The,
David A. Edwards, Feb, 10
Symphony of One, *Richard M. Romney*, Aug, 18

T
Tadevosyan, Grigor A.
Exceptional Book, an
Exceptional Answer, An,
Oct, 22
Take Care, *Riley M. Lorimer*,
Jul, 34
TALENTS
Bringing Abish to Life, *Jade Swartzberg and Shari Whyte*,
Jun, 24
Playing a Familiar Tune, *Jade Swartzberg*, Oct, 24
Right on Key, *Danielle Nye Poulter*, May, 24
Symphony of One, *Richard M. Romney*, Aug, 18
TEMPLES
Peace on Earth (poster), Oct, 17
TEMPLE WORK
All in My Family, *Jeff Whittaker*,
Oct, 45
I Took the Temple with Me,
Cory Keate, Mar, 18
Long Wait, The, *Alexa Justesen*,
Apr, 32
Reverencing the Temple, *Paul VanDenBerghe*, Feb, 18
TEMPTATION, OVERCOMING
If a Bug Flies into Your Mouth,
Aaron L. West, Sep, 24
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FIRST SNOWFALL

BY HEATHER ANDERSON

The snow fell, at first,
gray and wet,
thick and heavy,
almost like rain pouring
down the doubts of a long winter,
soaking into the parched,
water-thirsty ground.
I threw my head back,
opened my mouth
to catch the snowflakes,
and the sky was dizzy—
I was dizzy—
the kind of dizzy
when you realize
that you aren't afraid of falling,
when you know you have found
something that you had lost.



COMING NEXT MONTH

- *New 2008 Mutual theme. What does it mean to stand steadfast and immovable?*
- *A closer look at Lehi's journey in the desert.*
- *Why is gambling such a dangerous game?*
- *Seminary really does make you a morning person.*

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