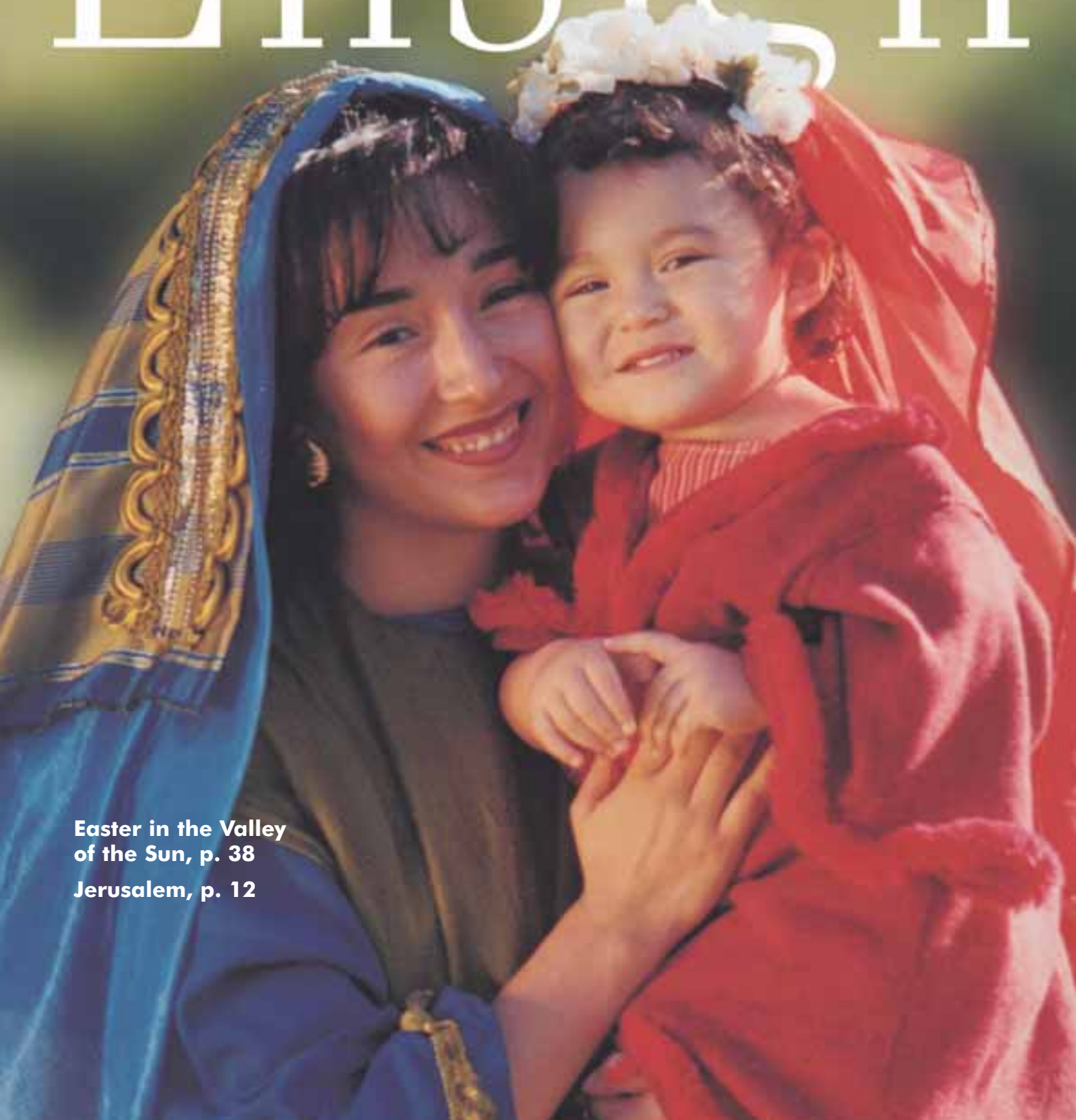
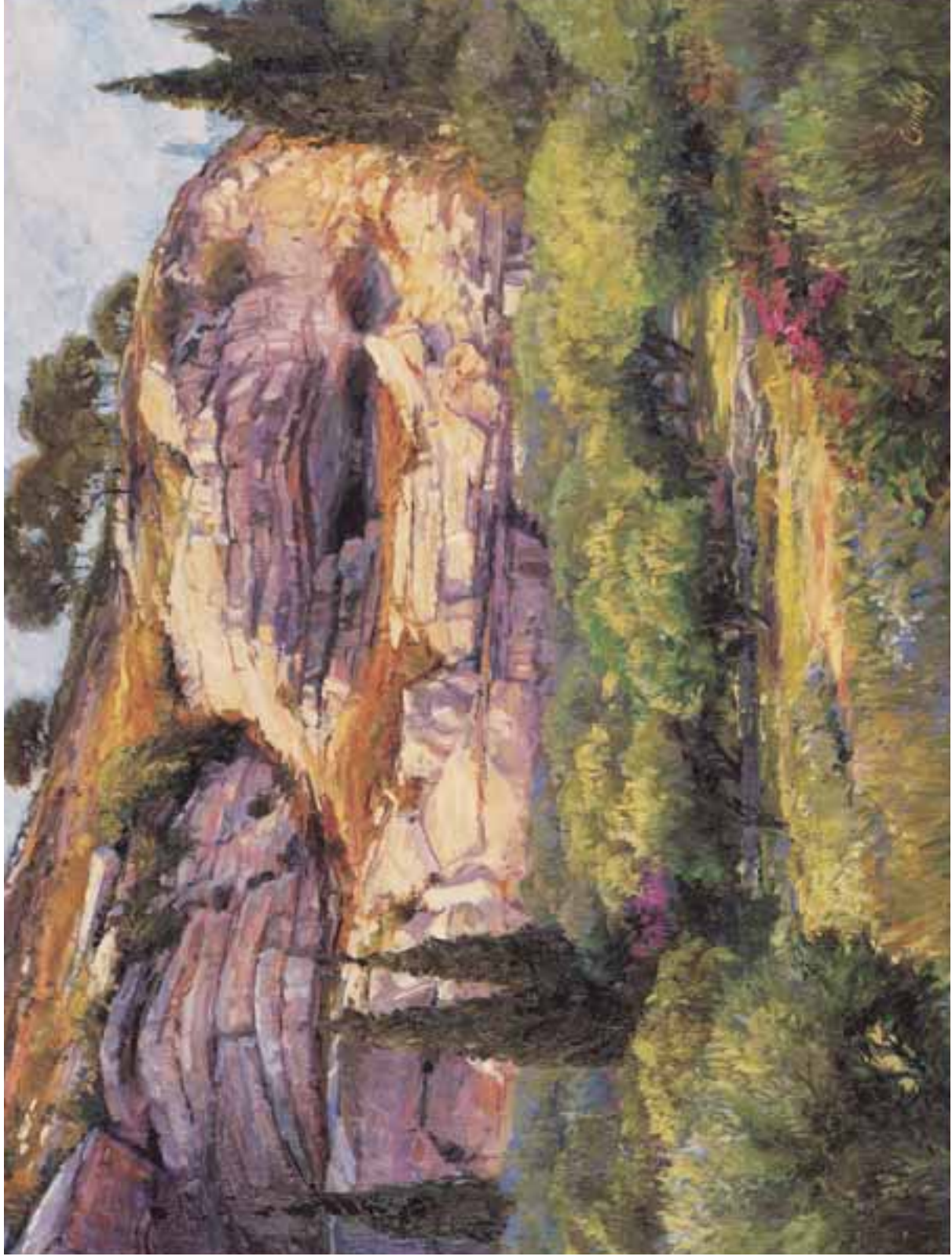


THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • APRIL 2003

# Ensign



**Easter in the Valley  
of the Sun, p. 38**  
**Jerusalem, p. 12**



**Golgotha, by Linda Curley Christensen**

*“And they took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha.” (John 19:16-17).*

# Ensign



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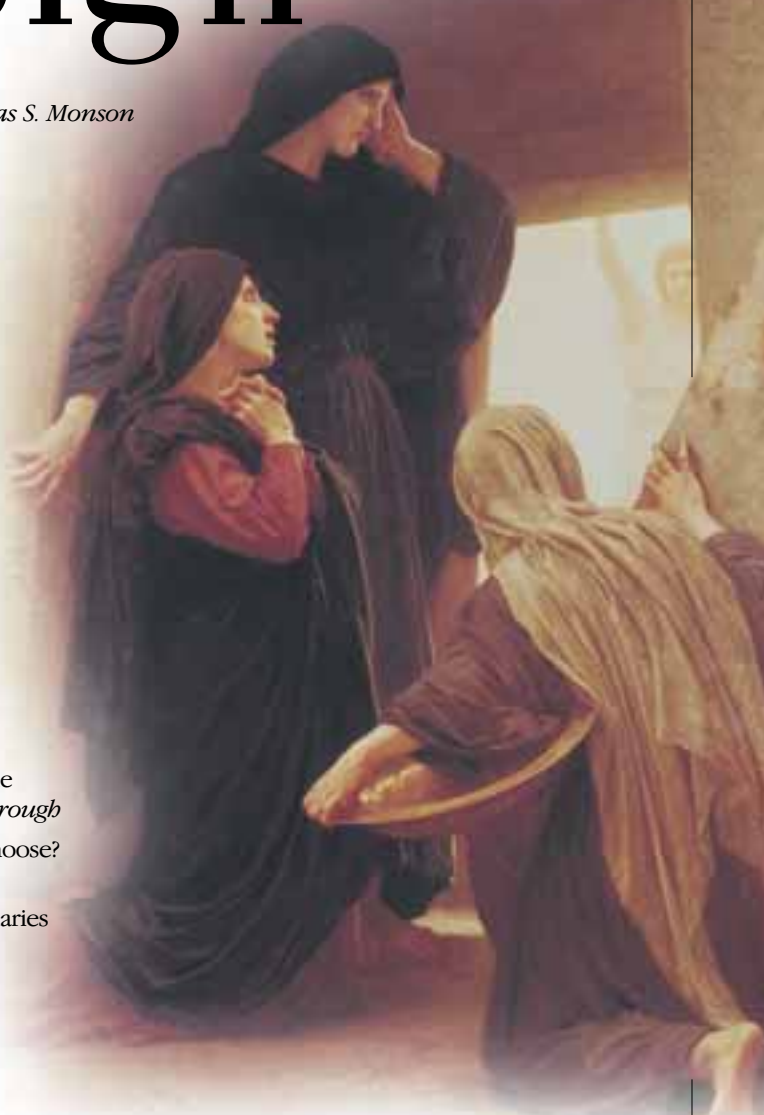
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# HE IS RISEN

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

First Counselor in the First Presidency

A visitor once asked me, “What is there to see while I am in Salt Lake City?” Instinctively I suggested a tour of Temple Square, a drive to the nearby canyons, a visit to the Bingham copper mine, and perhaps a swim in the Great Salt Lake. A fear of being misunderstood kept me from expressing the thought, “Have you considered spending an hour or two at one of our cemeteries?” I never did reveal to him that wherever I travel I try to pay a visit to the town cemetery. It is a time of contemplation, of reflection on the meaning of life and the inevitability of death.

## Greater Love

In the small cemetery in the town of Santa Clara, Utah, I remember the preponderance of Swiss names which adorn the weathered tombstones. Many of those persons left home and family in verdant Switzerland and, in response to the call “Come to Zion,” settled the communities where they now “rest in peace.” They endured spring floods, summer droughts, scant harvests, and backbreaking labors. They left a legacy of sacrifice.

The largest cemeteries, and in many respects those which evoke the most tender emotions, are honored as the resting places of men who died in the cauldron of conflict known as war while wearing the uniform of their country. One reflects on shattered dreams, unfulfilled hopes, grief-filled hearts, and lives cut short by the sharp scythe of war.

Acres of neat white crosses in the cities of France and Belgium accentuate the terrible toll of World War I. Verdun, France, is in reality a gigantic cemetery. Each spring as farmers till the earth, they uncover a helmet here, a gun barrel there—grim reminders of the millions of men who literally soaked the soil with the blood of their lives.

A tour of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and other battlefields of the American Civil War marks that conflict where brother fought against brother. Some families lost farms, others possessions. One family lost all. Let me share with you that memorable letter which President Abraham Lincoln wrote to Mrs. Lydia Bixby:

“Dear Madam:

“I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant



***The reality of the Resurrection provides to one and all the peace that surpasses understanding.***

General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

“Yours very sincerely and respectfully,  
“Abraham Lincoln.”<sup>1</sup>

A walk through Punchbowl Cemetery in Honolulu or the Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Manila reminds one that not all who died in World War II are buried in quiet fields of green. Many slipped beneath the waves of the oceans on which they sailed and on which they died.

Among the thousands of servicemen killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor was a sailor by the name of William Ball, from Fredericksburg, Iowa. What distinguished him from so many others who died on that day in 1941 was not any special act of heroism, but the tragic chain of events his death set in motion at home.

When William’s boyhood buddies, the five Sullivan brothers from the nearby town of Waterloo, received word of his death, they marched out together to enlist in the navy. The Sullivans, who wished to avenge their friend, insisted that they remain together, and the navy granted their wish. On November 14, 1942, the cruiser on which the brothers served, the USS *Juneau*, was hit and sunk in a battle off Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.

Almost two months went by before Mrs. Thomas Sullivan received the news, which arrived not by the usual telegram but by special envoy: all five of her sons were reported missing in action in the South Pacific and presumed dead. Their bodies were never recovered.

One sentence only, spoken by one person only, provides a fitting epitaph: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”<sup>2</sup>

### “Not Grief but Gratitude”

Frequently the profound influence one life has on the lives of others is never spoken and occasionally little known. Such was the experience of a teacher of girls, even 12-year-olds in the Beehive class of Mutual. She had no children of her own, though she and her husband dearly longed for children. Her love was expressed through the devotion to her special girls as she taught them eternal truths and lessons of life. Then came illness, followed by death. She was but 27.

Each year on Memorial Day, her girls made a pilgrimage of prayer to the graveside of their teacher. First there were seven, then four, then two, and eventually just one, who continued the annual visit, always placing on the grave a bouquet of irises—a symbol of heartfelt gratitude. That last girl later became a teacher of girls. Little wonder she is so successful. She mirrors the reflection of the teacher from whom came her inspiration. The life that teacher lived, the lessons that teacher taught, are not buried beneath the headstone which marks her grave but live on in the personalities she helped to shape and the lives she so selflessly enriched. One is reminded of another master teacher, even the Lord. Once, with His finger, He wrote in the sand a message.<sup>3</sup> The winds of time erased forever the words He wrote but not the life He lived.

“All that we can know about those we have loved and lost,” wrote Thornton Wilder, “is that they would wish us to remember them with a more intensified realization of their reality. . . . The highest tribute to the dead is not grief but gratitude.”

### The Keller Boys

Some years ago, in beautiful Heber Valley just east of Salt Lake City, a loving mother and devoted father returned to that personal haven called home to discover that their three eldest sons lay dead. The night was bitter cold, and the fierce wind swept the falling snow, which covered the chimney, trapping deadly carbon monoxide fumes throughout the house.

The joint funeral service for the Keller boys was one of the

most touching experiences of my life. The residents of the community had placed aside their daily tasks, children were excused from school, and all thronged to the chapel to express their deep feelings of condolence. So long as time and memory endure, I shall remember the scene of three shiny caskets, followed by grief-stricken parents and grandparents making their way to the front of the building.

The first speaker was the wrestling coach of the local high school. He paid tribute to Louis, the oldest boy. With an emotion-filled voice and choking back the tears, he told how Louis was not necessarily the most gifted wrestler on the team but added, "No one tried harder. What he lacked in athletic skill he made up with a determined heart."

Then a youth leader spoke of Travis. He told how Travis had excelled in Scouting, in Aaronic Priesthood work, and was such a sterling example to his friends.

Finally, a distinguished appearing and obviously competent elementary school teacher told of Jason, the youngest of the three. She described him as quiet, even shy. Then, without embarrassment, she told how Jason had, in the scrawled penmanship of a boy, sent to her the sweetest and most welcome letter she had ever received. Its message was brief—just three words: "I love you." She could barely complete her talk, so deep-felt were her emotions.

Through the tears and the sorrow of that special day, I observed eternal lessons that had been taught by those boys whose lives were honored and whose mortal missions concluded.

A coach expressed the determination to look beyond athletic prowess and into the heart of each boy. A youth leader made a



solemn vow that every boy and girl would have the benefit which the program of the Church provided. An elementary school teacher looked at the small children, classmates of Jason. She said nothing, but her eyes revealed the determination of her soul. The message was unmistakably clear: "I will love each child. Each boy, each girl will be guided in the search for truth, in the development of talent, and be introduced to the wonderful world of service."

And the audience could never again be the same. All will strive toward that perfection spoken of by the Master. Our inspiration? The lives of the boys who now rest from care and sorrow, and the fortitude of parents who trust in the Lord with all their hearts, who lean not to their own understanding, and who in all their ways acknowledge Him, knowing that He will direct their paths.<sup>4</sup>

**W**e can draw inspiration from the lives of the Keller boys, who now rest from care and sorrow, and the fortitude of parents who trust in the Lord with all their hearts.



**O**n that glorious day of resurrection, the spirit and body will be reunited. This promise became a reality when Mary and others approached the garden tomb.

Let me share with you a portion of a letter sent to me by the noble mother of these three sons. It was written soon after their passing.

“We do have days and nights that right now seem so overwhelming. The change in our home life has been so drastic. With almost half our family gone now, the cooking, washing, and even shopping are different. We miss the noise and clutter, the teasing and playing together. Such are gone. Sunday is so quiet. We miss seeing the sacrament blessed and passed by our sons. Sunday was truly our family together day. We ponder the thought: no missions, no

weddings, no grandchildren. We would not ask for their return, but we could not say we would ever have willingly given them up. We have returned to our Church duties and our family responsibilities. Our desire is to so live that the Keller family will be a forever family.”

To the Kellers, the Sullivans, and indeed to all who have loved and lost, let me share with you the conviction of my soul, the testimony of my heart, and the actual experiences of my life.

### **Death, a New Chapter of Life**

We know each one lived in the spirit world with Heavenly Father. We understand we have come to earth to learn, to live, to progress in our eternal journey toward perfection. Some remain on earth but for a moment, while others live long upon the land. The measure is not how long we live but rather how well we live. Then come death and the beginning of a new chapter of life. Where does that chapter lead?

Many years ago I stood by the bedside of a young man, the father of two children, as he hovered between life and the great beyond. He took my hand in his, looked into my eyes, and pleadingly asked, “Bishop, I know I am about to die. Tell me what happens to my spirit when I die.”

I prayed for heavenly guidance before attempting to respond. My attention was directed to the Book of Mormon, which rested on the table beside his bed. I held the book in my hand, and it providentially opened to the 40th chapter of Alma. I began to read aloud:

“Now my son, here is somewhat more I would say unto thee; for I perceive that thy mind is worried concerning the resurrection of the dead. . . .

“Now, concerning the state of the soul



between death and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, . . . are taken home to that God who gave them life.

“And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow.”<sup>5</sup>

My young friend closed his eyes, expressed a sincere thank-you, and silently slipped away to that paradise about which we had spoken.

### Victory over the Tomb

Then comes that glorious day of resurrection, when spirit and body will be reunited, never again to be separated. “I am the resurrection, and the life,” said the Christ to the grieving Martha. “He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”<sup>6</sup>

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”<sup>7</sup>

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. . . . That where I am, there ye may be also.”<sup>8</sup>

This transcendent promise became a reality when Mary and the other Mary approached the garden tomb—that cemetery which had but one occupant. Let Luke, the physician, describe their experience:

“Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre. . . .

“And they found the stone rolled away. . . .

“. . . They entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

“. . . As they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

“And . . . said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?”<sup>9</sup>

“He is not here: for he is risen.”<sup>10</sup>

This is the clarion call of Christendom. The reality of the Resurrection provides to one and all the peace that surpasses understanding.<sup>11</sup> It comforts those whose loved ones lie in Flanders fields or who perished in the depths of the sea or rest in tiny Santa Clara or peaceful Heber Valley. It is a universal truth.

As the least of His disciples, I declare my personal witness that death has been conquered, victory over the tomb has been won. May the words made sacred by Him who fulfilled them become actual knowledge to all. Remember them. Cherish them. Honor them. *He is risen.* ■

### NOTES

1. In *Selections from the Letters, Speeches, and State Papers of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Ida M. Tarbell (1911), 109.
2. John 15:13.
3. See John 8:6.
4. See Proverbs 3:5–6.
5. Alma 40:1, 11–12.
6. John 11:25–26.
7. John 14:27.
8. John 14:2–3.
9. Luke 24:1–5.
10. Matthew 28:6.
11. See Philippians 4:7.

## IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After prayerful preparation, share this message using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. Following are a few examples:

1. Read the first section of this message with family members. Invite them to tell about their experiences at cemeteries or funeral services. Share your feelings about the Resurrection and President Monson’s testimony in the last two paragraphs.
2. Read the first two paragraphs under the heading “Death, a New Chapter of Life.” Ask family members what they would say to answer the dying man’s question. Have them tell what they learn about life after death from Alma 40:1, 11–12; John 11:25–26; 14:2–3, 27.
3. Ask each person to write at least one question about life after death. Discuss their questions and share insights from the message that help answer the questions.

# Finding Faith in Christ

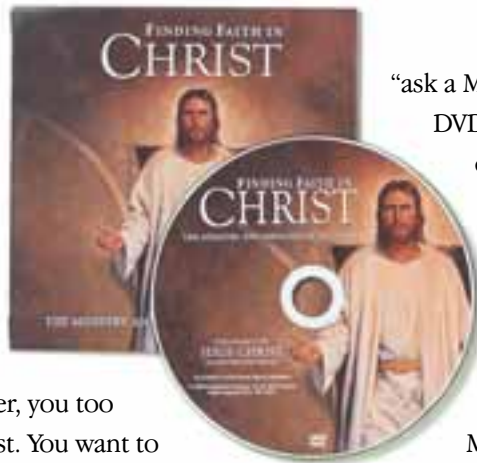
*A new Church film, included as a DVD with this Ensign, is meant to be shared with neighbors and friends.*

**T**homas, the Lord's Apostle, knew. Though many think of him as one who doubted, he overcame his doubt. As one who saw the resurrected Savior, Thomas bore testimony that helped others find faith in the Lord and believe in the gospel.

You also know. Though at times you may wish you were stronger or wiser, you too have a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. You want to share it so much that sometimes you feel you could almost burst. You know the gospel would bless your neighbors, but how can you express what you feel?

A new Church film may help.

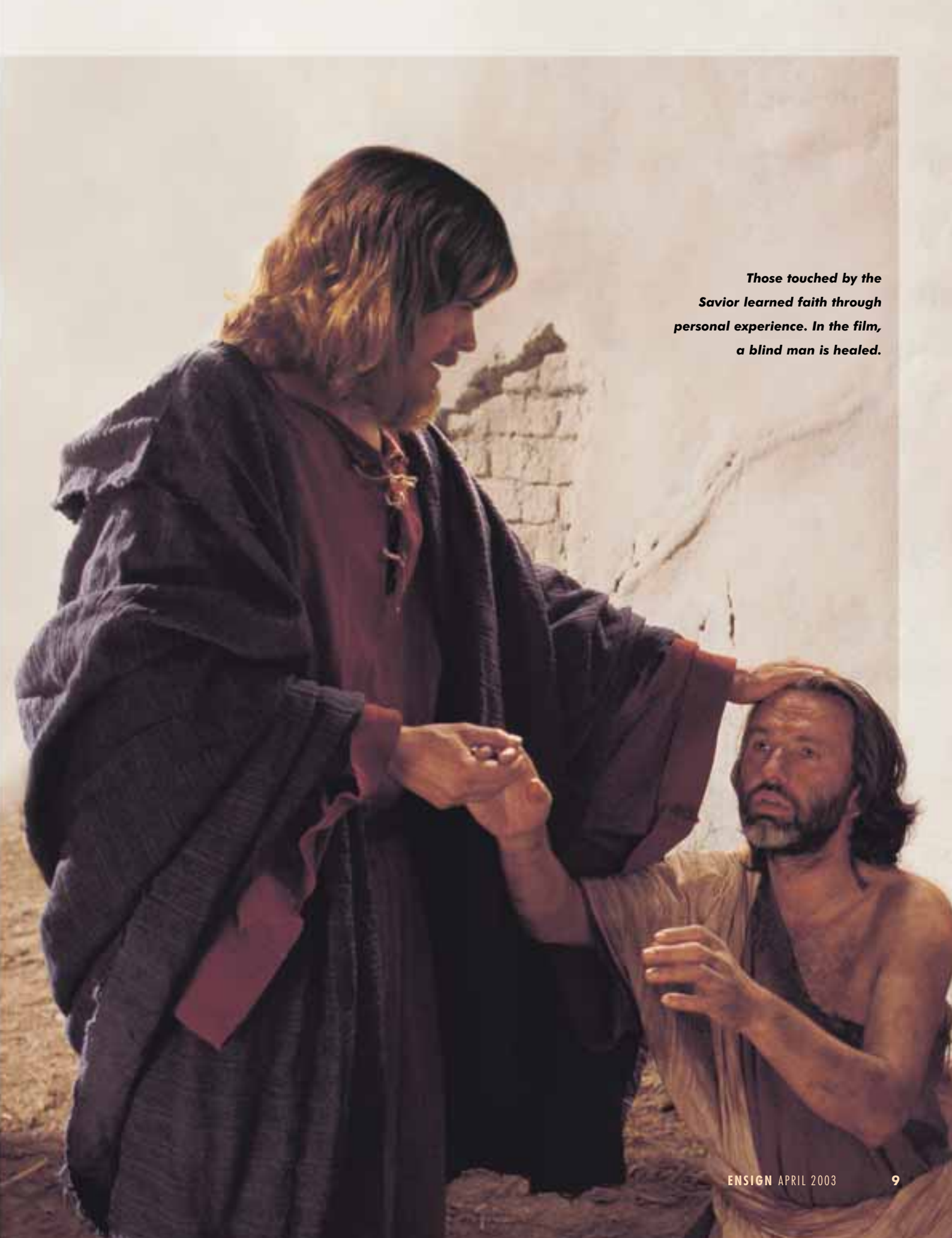
Included with this issue of the *Ensign* for subscribers in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand is a free DVD of the film *Finding Faith in Christ*. It portrays events from the life of Christ as recalled by Thomas. Through his eyes, viewers come to understand how he found faith in the Savior and how each of us can find that same faith. The film has been prepared to coincide with an Easter television advertising campaign in North America directed toward those who are not members of the Church. Viewers are invited to



“ask a Mormon neighbor” for a free copy. The DVD can be given away or loaned, or you can invite others into your home to watch it.

“For the first time we are combining the power of members and missionaries with media to help the world understand what we know about the Savior,” said Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “It is our hope that if members are asked about *Finding Faith in Christ*, they will share the DVD they received. We also hope that sharing the DVD will give members the opportunity to express their feelings about the Savior. Since so many people will learn of the film from our television ads, members may want to approach friends or family who are not of our faith and ask them if they would like to see it. We hope members will prayerfully consider how and with whom to share it.”

Elder Ballard also suggested that members and missionaries could work together when sharing the film with those who are not members of the Church: “All missionaries in the United States and Canada will have copies of the TV



***Those touched by the Savior learned faith through personal experience. In the film, a blind man is healed.***



**Left: Thomas (center) was among the disciples who were personal witnesses of the Savior’s power and divinity.**

**Below: The Lord strengthened the faith of those He healed and forgave, like the woman taken in adultery.**



ads, and members can get better acquainted with their local missionaries by asking to see the ads.” Priesthood leaders in the United States and Canada will also receive a copy of the DVD.

This advertising campaign marks the first time viewers have been invited to speak to their Latter-day Saint neighbors rather than to simply call a telephone number (although a toll-free number is also provided). Church members can order additional English DVDs or VHS videocassettes from local distribution centers. Members may also provide interested neighbors and associates with pass-along cards that offer a free videocassette. See “For Additional Copies” for further information.

The film portrays Thomas visiting with a family in their home. Most are believers, but one man, Jonah, is doubtful. As Jonah wonders and worries out loud, Thomas provides a reassuring voice of comfort.

“Must faith always be blind?” Jonah asks.

“Without faith, Jonah, even seeing is not enough,” Thomas replies.

Events from the life of the Savior are presented as Thomas recalls what he personally experienced. These events include portrayals of Christ healing the sick, raising the dead, teaching the disciples, and answering those who accused Him. Also depicted are His trial, the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and His subsequent appearance to Mary, to others, and to the Apostles. The resurrected Savior calls Thomas forward to feel the wounds in His hands and in His feet and asks him to “be not faithless, but believing.”

“Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed,” the Savior tells Thomas. “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (see John 20:27, 29).

In response to Thomas’s testimony of the Savior, Jonah says, “Almost I wish I could believe.”

“You can, Jonah, you can,” Thomas replies, “and because He lives, we too shall live, all of us. All of us.”

Just as Thomas did, we can bear testimony of the Savior based on what we have felt, seen, and heard. We can share with our neighbors the wonderful truth that “because He lives, we too shall live, all of us.” As members of the Church, we are blessed with the additional testimony of the living Christ that comes because of the Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith. We have the privilege of sharing this glorious message with our neighbors and friends. ■

## FOR ADDITIONAL COPIES



Additional copies of *Finding Faith in Christ*, DVD (item no. 54041) and VHS (item no. 53668), are available for purchase through distribution centers, on the Internet at [www.ldscatalog.com](http://www.ldscatalog.com), or by calling 240-3800 (in the Salt Lake City area) or 1-800-537-5971 (in the United States and Canada only).

Pass-along cards (item no. 36589) offering the VHS videocassette are available. Members may use these cards to invite friends and associates to call for their own free copy. ■



# These Shepherds

BY SHARON PRICE ANDERSON

*Sheep of the Judean hills give meat,  
skins and wool for raiment, tents—  
cover from storm, shelter from heat.  
In fields of Bethlehem where David slew  
lion, bear, and fed his father's sheep,  
temple flocks now safely graze.*

*Those who watch have been well taught  
that in the shadow of a distant Eden  
firstlings offered hope. They know how  
God spared birthright son of Abraham,  
provided sacrificial ram for  
grass-kindled flame, stone-tabled meal.*

*Remembering that death  
passed over Israel's house  
because of unblemished blood,  
these know the altar-end  
of tender ones they nurture, name,  
and carry in their bosoms.*

*For solemn feasts they gently lead  
the young into Jerusalem  
so sin-stained robes may be washed  
white as the glory of the Lord,  
so peace may be complete.*

*Tonight with faith they haste to find  
a Savior and a certain sign—  
Christ the future sacrifice—  
swaddled, as the angel said,  
in wool-soft bands  
and lying in a manger.*

*These are they prepared  
to spread the word abroad:  
This day is born the Lamb of God.*

ירושלם

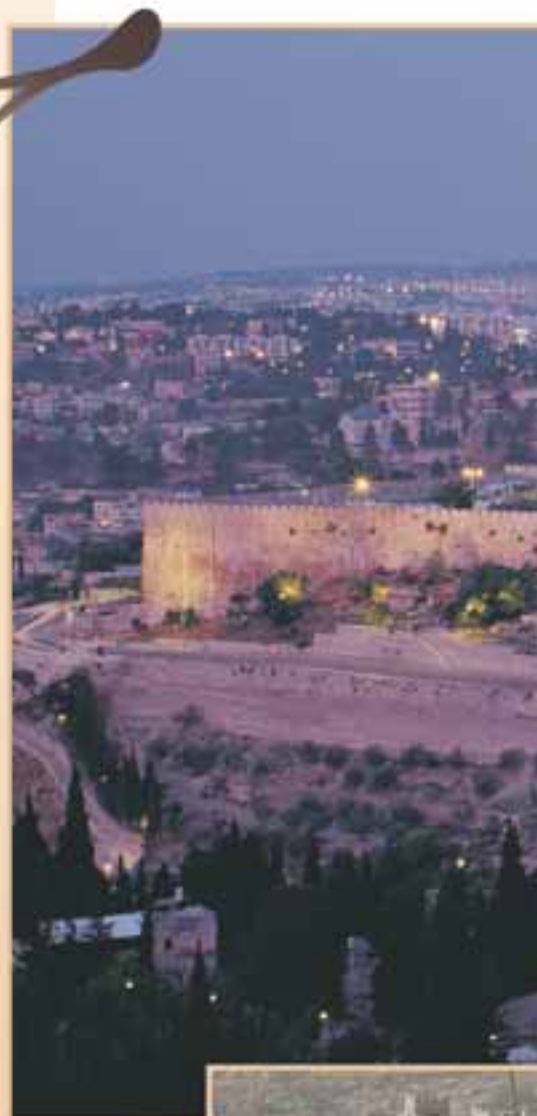
JERUSALEM

القدس

*Jews, Christians, and Muslims  
all worship in this holy city, where they  
each have a number of sacred sites.*

BY D. KELLY OGDEN

No city has shaped earth's history and destiny as has Jerusalem. For 40 centuries Semites, Egyptians, Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Muslims, Crusaders, Turks, Europeans, Arabs, and Israelis have all paraded through the pages of its history. Impressive personalities such as Melchizedek, Abraham, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Lehi, Jeremiah, Alexander the Great, Pompey, Cleopatra, Herod, Peter, Paul, Titus, Constantine, Muhammad, Richard the Lion-Hearted, Maimonides, Saladin, Süleyman the Magnificent, and a host of others have played pivotal roles in Jerusalem's past.



TOP: PHOTOGRAPH © 1999 JOHN TELFORD; RIGHT INSET: PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD CLEAVE; FAR RIGHT INSET: PHOTOGRAPH BY FLOYD HOLDMAN



***Above: Evening settles across a Muslim cemetery and the eastern wall of Jerusalem's Old City. The golden Dome of the Rock (center) and the domed al-Aqsa Mosque (far left) rest atop what Jews and Christians call the Temple Mount and Muslims call the Haram esh-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary). Far left: A model depicts Jerusalem at the time of Christ. Left: Sheep graze outside an ancient section of the Old City wall.***



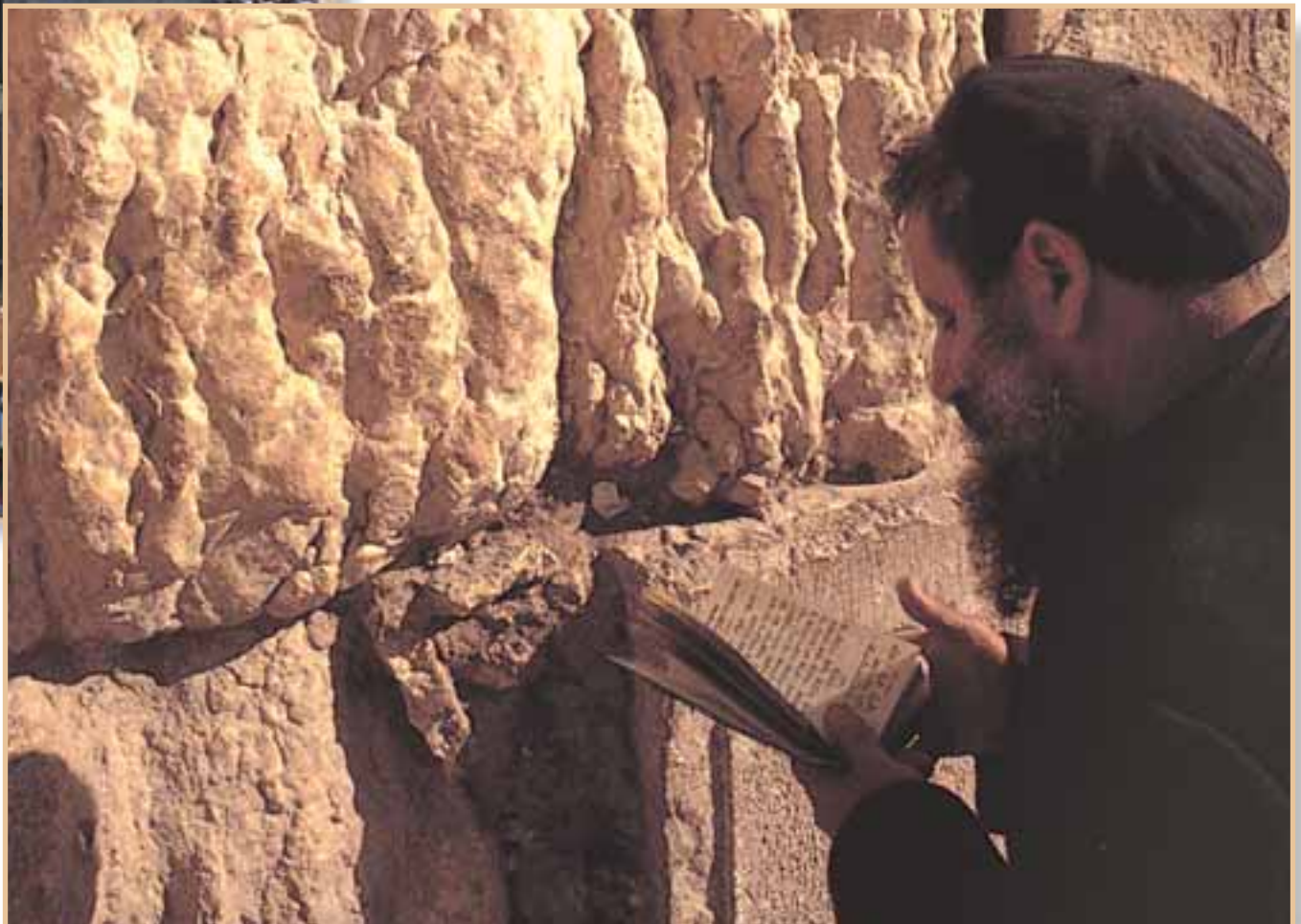
Positioned at the crossroads of the eastern Mediterranean lands—the only region in the world where three continents come together—Jerusalem has naturally evolved as a focal point of international economic, political, and religious concern. However, it has never been an economic or political superpower. Its importance and influence stem primarily from its religious relevance. Jerusalem will forever stand as a symbol of God’s contact with earth.

Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh, was born near here. Jerusalem is where the Redeemer brought about the greatest events and contributions of all time—His atoning sacrifice and Resurrection from





**Far left: Jews gather for spiritual renewal near the Western Wall of the Temple Mount. Left inset: A Jewish family celebrates a bar mitzvah, a boy's passage into manhood. Left: Abraham's Rock rests in the Dome of the Rock. Tradition indicates Abraham placed Isaac on this rock as a sacrificial offering. Tradition also designates this rock as the site from which the Muslim prophet Muhammad ascended into heaven. Below: A man places his written prayer between cracks in the Western Wall and reads from sacred Jewish writings.**



the dead. These and many other events have made the name *Jerusalem* forever holy.

There have been and are now other important religious cities in the ancient and modern worlds, but only Jerusalem is central to three of the world's major religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. To adherents of these faiths, including the millions of believers who have never seen Jerusalem, the depth of feeling for this city is revealed in the following expressions.

From Judaism: "Of the ten measures of beauty that came down to the world, Jerusalem took nine"





***Above inset: According to tradition Jesus and His Apostles ate the Last Supper in this upper room. Above: Some Christians believe Jesus' body was laid in this garden tomb. Left inset: Other Christians believe Jesus' body was laid in a tomb now located within this building, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Left: Ancient olive trees adorn the Garden of Gethsemane.***

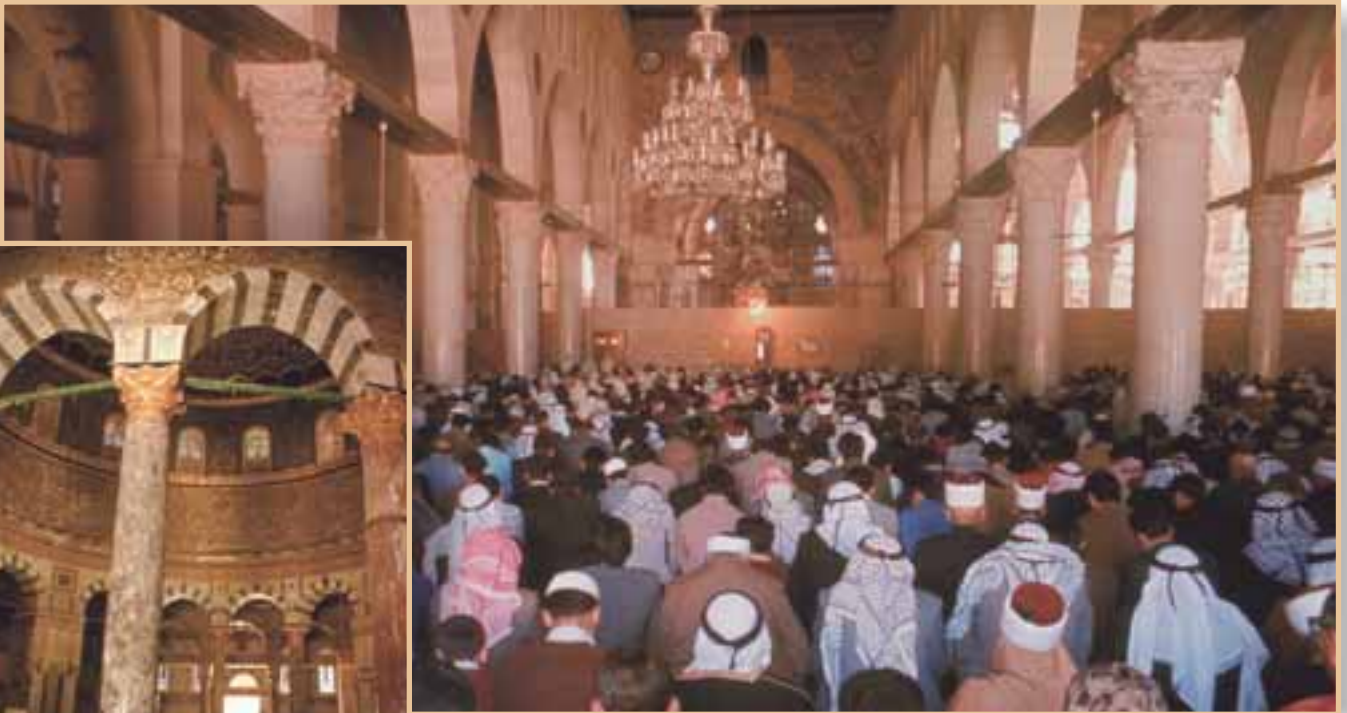
(Talmud, Kiddushin 49b). “A man who has not seen Jerusalem in its splendor has never seen a beautiful city in his life” (Talmud, Succah 51b).

From Christianity: Of Jerusalem, Jesus said, “It is the city of the great King” (Matthew 5:35), and the Apostle Paul taught, “Come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Hebrews 12:22).

From Islam: “The choice of Allah of all his lands is Jerusalem. . . . The dew which descends upon Jerusalem is a remedy from every sickness because it is from the gardens of Paradise.”<sup>1</sup>



LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY FLOYD HOLDMAN; TOP: PHOTOGRAPHS © ASAP LTD/INDEX STOCK; FAR RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH © 2002 JOHN TELFORD



***Top: Worshipers gather to pray inside the al-Aqsa Mosque on the holy mount. Above: Muslims perform ceremonial washings at this fountain before entering the mosque. (Jews, Christians, and Muslims all practice ritual cleansings before sacred rites.) Left and left inset: The Dome of the Rock is one of Islam's holiest sites. It was dedicated in A.D. 691.***



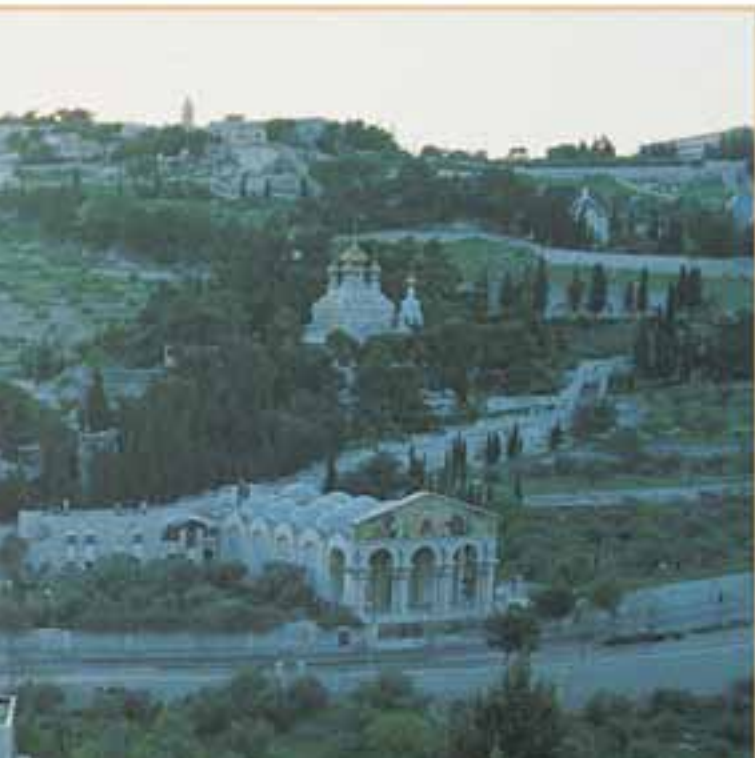
Not only have these three great religions sung praises to Jerusalem, they have erected an impressive array of buildings at sacred sites. Jerusalem's palaces, synagogues, churches, shrines, monasteries, convents, mosques, yeshivas, and other centers of government, learning, and worship represent an incalculable collective influence on the course of human history.

Throughout its past and present devastating conflicts, Jerusalem has remained a revered city. And it has the promise of a peaceful future as a dwelling place for the Lord and His Saints during His great millennial reign. ■

**NOTE**


1. Quoted in Walid Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876–1948* (1984), 21.

D. Kelly Ogden is a member of the Edgemont Sixth Ward, Provo Utah Edgemont Stake.



***Left: The sun rises over the Mount of Olives, where the Messiah will descend in great glory. The Orson Hyde Memorial Garden is nearly surrounded by a line of tall trees at upper left. The Garden of Gethsemane is at right center. Below and left inset: Brigham Young University's Jerusalem Center overlooks the city. Bottom: A pathway leads through the area where Elder Orson Hyde of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles dedicated the Holy Land in 1841.***





WORDS  
OF  
JESUS

# Death and Resurrection

*“I am the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25).*

BY ELDER WALTER F. GONZÁLEZ

Of the Seventy



***The Savior’s teachings regarding His own and our death and Resurrection should be engraved upon our hearts.***

About 2,000 years ago in a small village outside Jerusalem, two sisters saw their brother become ill and die. Mary and Martha dearly loved their brother Lazarus, so their anguish was great. Their friends and neighbors tried to comfort them but failed. Their sorrow was so great that upon seeing them Jesus was filled with compassion and wept (see John 11:30–35). We can perhaps imagine how Martha felt when the Savior told her, “Thy brother shall rise again” (John 11:23). Her response reflected a certain understanding of the plan of salvation: “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day” (John 11:24). The Lord’s answer to Martha emphatically reassured her: “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (John 11:25–26).

Martha then bore solemn testimony of Him: “I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world” (John 11:27).

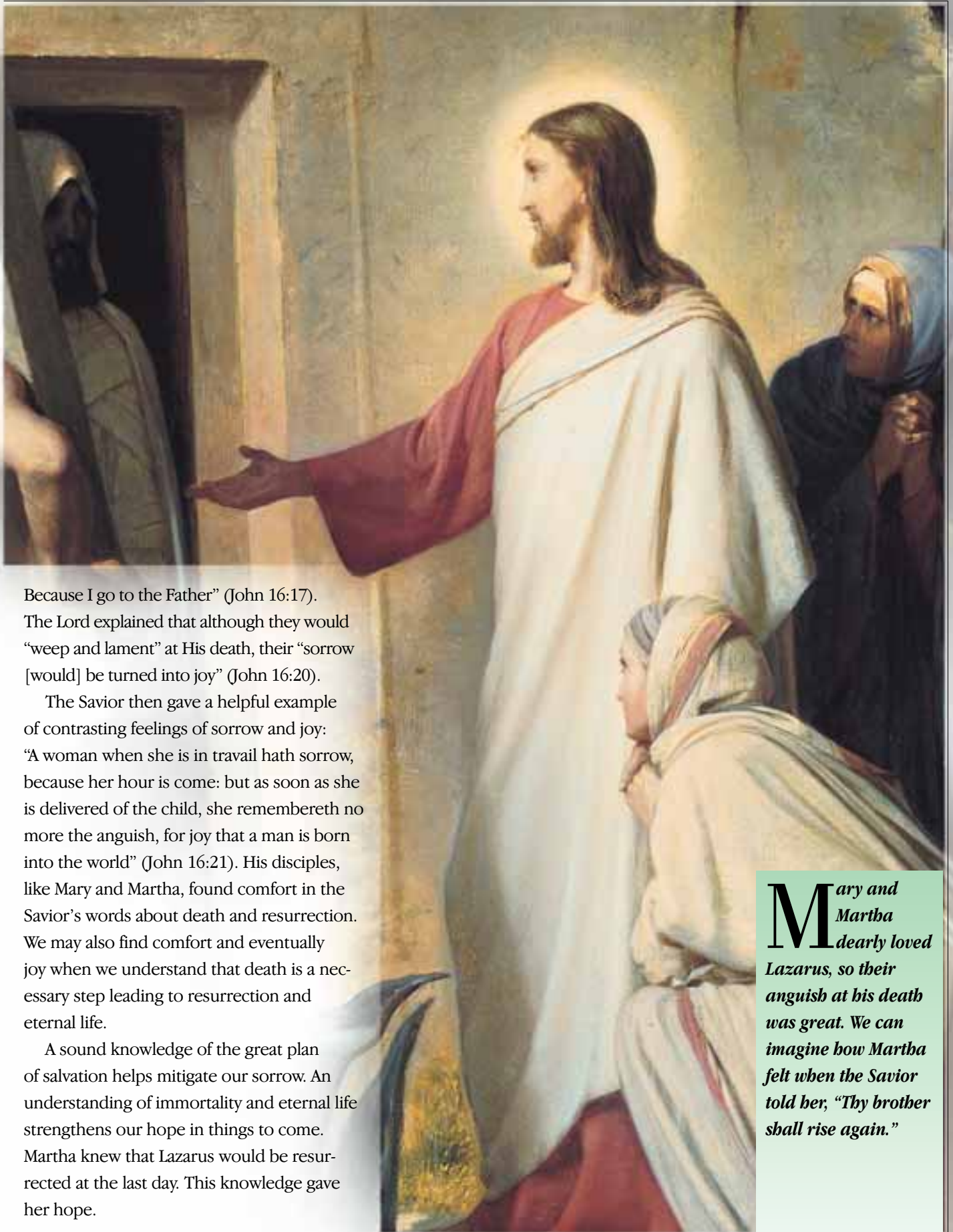
Martha’s faith was soon fulfilled as she and Mary were comforted by the power of God made manifest in the raising of their brother from the dead.

## **Sorrow and Joy**

On many occasions during His mortal ministry, our Savior took the opportunity to teach about death and resurrection, particularly His own. His words can help us, much as they helped Martha, to cope with the sorrow that comes when a loved one dies. An understanding that the gospel is taught and practiced among our dead, that they too will be resurrected, and that they and we may achieve exaltation can deepen our gratitude for the Savior.

The passing away of someone we love brings sorrow to our souls. We can understand why Martha and Mary wept and lamented the passing of Lazarus. On another occasion, the Savior’s disciples were similarly concerned and wondered what He had meant when He said to them, “A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me . . . ,





Because I go to the Father” (John 16:17). The Lord explained that although they would “weep and lament” at His death, their “sorrow [would] be turned into joy” (John 16:20).

The Savior then gave a helpful example of contrasting feelings of sorrow and joy: “A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world” (John 16:21). His disciples, like Mary and Martha, found comfort in the Savior’s words about death and resurrection. We may also find comfort and eventually joy when we understand that death is a necessary step leading to resurrection and eternal life.

A sound knowledge of the great plan of salvation helps mitigate our sorrow. An understanding of immortality and eternal life strengthens our hope in things to come. Martha knew that Lazarus would be resurrected at the last day. This knowledge gave her hope.

**M**ary and Martha dearly loved Lazarus, so their anguish at his death was great. We can imagine how Martha felt when the Savior told her, “Thy brother shall rise again.”

LEFT, DETAIL FROM JESUS AT THE HOME OF MARTHA AND MARY, BY JUSTINE DORÉ, RIGHT, DETAIL FROM LAZARUS, BY CARL HEINRICH BLOCH, COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC MUSEUM AT FREDERIKSBORG IN HILLERÖD, DENMARK

But even with this knowledge, we miss our loved ones. The pain is better dealt with when we understand that our Savior has atoned for our sins and was resurrected, that all people will also be resurrected, and that all have the opportunity to attain eternal life.

### **The Savior's Death and Resurrection**

On one occasion, a Pharisee named Nicodemus approached the Savior at night. Impressed by His miracles, Nicodemus sought words of counsel. Jesus taught the Pharisee that we must be born again. The Savior then prophesied, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3:14; see also Moses 7:55).

Nicodemus was not the only one to hear the Redeemer repeat such prophecy. Jesus taught His disciples, "The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day" (Mark 9:31).

During the last week of the Lord's ministry, He continued to talk about what was about to happen to Him. When Andrew and Philip approached Him concerning some Greeks who wished to see Him, Jesus took the opportunity to teach: "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:23–24).

The Book of Mormon prophet Abinadi similarly taught: "The grave hath no victory, and the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ. He is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened; yea, and also a life which is endless, that there can be no more death" (Mosiah 16:8–9).

### **Our Resurrection and Exaltation**

Because of the Savior, we can look forward to a reunion with those who have passed away. We are blessed with the certainty that we will again see them, embrace them, and express to them our love.

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained: "Would you think

it strange if I relate what I have seen in vision in relation to this interesting theme? . . . So plain was the vision, that I actually saw men, before they had ascended from the tomb, as though they were getting up slowly. They took each other by the hand and said to each other, 'My father, my son, my mother, my daughter, my brother, my sister.' And when the voice calls for the dead to arise, suppose I am laid by the side of my father, what would be the first joy of my heart? To meet my father, my mother, my brother, my sister; and when they are by my side, I embrace them and they me."<sup>1</sup>

The reality of a universal resurrection along with the possibility of exaltation because of our Redeemer's supernatural sacrifice are reason enough to merit our everlasting gratitude. He *is* the Resurrection and the Life, and we so testify to the world.

The living and dead have the opportunity to hear His voice and live. Those on both sides of the veil must, however, abide by certain conditions to receive all gospel blessings. The Savior explained to Martha one of these conditions: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25–26). Having faith in Him is the first principle of the gospel. Such faith moves us to repent and to make and keep covenants with God so that eventually we may have eternal life.

Inasmuch as we obey His commandments and are faithful to our covenants, we are blessed to expect a joyful family reunited and crowned with eternal life. In the words of Jesus Christ: "[The dead] shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29). Regarding this verse, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "Some shall rise to the everlasting burnings of God; . . . and some shall rise to the damnation of their own filthiness, which is as exquisite a torment as the lake of fire and brimstone."<sup>2</sup>

Repentance is the key to avoiding the "resurrection of damnation." Sincere repentance activates the great plan of salvation for our good. Our "Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. And he hath

risen again from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him, on conditions of repentance” (D&C 18:11–12).

The Lamanite prophet Samuel fully understood the relationship between repentance and a joyful resurrection. Boldly standing upon the wall, he taught:

“The resurrection of Christ redeemeth mankind, yea, even all mankind, and bringeth them back into the presence of the Lord.

“Yea, and it bringeth to pass the condition of repentance, that whosoever repenteth the same is not hewn down and cast into the fire; but whosoever repenteth not is hewn down and cast into the fire” (Helaman 14:17–18).

As we learn the promises regarding resurrection and exaltation, our belief in the Savior and our desire to repent and return to Him grow deeper and stronger.

### Engraved upon Our Hearts

After the Savior told Martha that He is the Resurrection and the Life, He asked her, “Believeth thou this?” Martha’s response showed great faith: “Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world” (John 11:26–27).

We may also ask ourselves: Do I believe Jesus’ words about immortality and eternal life? Do I believe in a happy reunion with my loved ones who have passed away? To the extent that we allow these truths to permeate our lives, we will also respond with great faith and a fortified testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

His teachings regarding His own and our death and Resurrection should be engraved upon our hearts. On a certain occasion when His disciples wondered at the mighty power of God found in Him, the Savior said, “Let

these sayings sink down into your [hearts]: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men” (Luke 9:44; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 9:44).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “God has revealed His Son from the heavens and the doctrine of the resurrection also; and we have a knowledge that those we bury here God will bring up again, clothed upon and quickened by the Spirit of the great God. . . . Let these truths sink down in our hearts, that we may even here begin to enjoy that which shall be in full hereafter.”<sup>3</sup>

A search of the teachings of our Savior about death and resurrection strengthens our hope in immortality and eternal life. This hope can fill our very hearts with the joy Martha and Mary must have experienced. For the promise of the Savior is: “Thy [loved ones] shall rise again” (John 11:23). ■

### NOTES

1. *History of the Church*, 5:361–62.
2. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 361.
3. *Teachings*, 296.

**B**ecause of the Savior, we can look forward to a reunion with those who have passed away. We will see them, embrace them, and express to them our love.

# New Testament Times at a Glance

## THE SAVIOR'S FINAL WEEK



EVENTS	4	5	6	7	8	10
TRAVELS 1 3						
SERMONS						9
MIRACLES 2						
PARABLES						
BOOK OF MORMON 80						

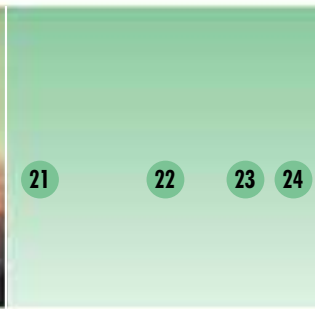
Dates are approximate.

\*According to Jewish custom, days begin at sundown.

- 1 **John 11:7** Jesus returned to the Jerusalem area for the final time.
- 2 **John 11:1–53** Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (see Bible Dictionary [BD], “Lazarus,” 723).
- 3 **John 11:54** Jesus went to the city of Ephraim.
- 4 **John 12:1–8** In Bethany, Mary anointed Jesus’ feet (see BD, “Spikenard,” 776).
- 5 **John 12:9–11** Chief priests conspired to kill Jesus and Lazarus (see BD, “Sanhedrin,” 769).
- 6 **Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 21:1–6** As instructed, two disciples brought a colt to Jesus
- 7 **Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 21:7–11** Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a colt. Multitudes received Him as a king (see BD, “Hosanna,” 704–5).
- 8 **Luke 19:41–44** Jesus wept over Jerusalem (see BD, “Jerusalem,” 712).
- 9 **John 12:20–50** At the temple Jesus taught some Greek Jews about His Father.
- 10 **Matthew 21:12–16** Jesus cast money changers out of the temple a second time.
- 11 **Matthew 21:17** Jesus returned to Bethany.
- 12 **Matthew 21:18–22** On His way back to Jerusalem, Jesus cursed the barren fig tree (see BD, “Fig tree,” 674).
- 13 **Matthew 21:23–46** Chief priests challenged Jesus’ authority. He rebuked them.
- 14 **Matthew 21:28–22:14** Parables of the two sons, the wicked husbandmen, and the marriage of the king’s son.
- 15 **Matthew 22:15–46** Enemies tried to trap Jesus in His words. He answered their questions about Roman taxes, marriage and the Resurrection, and the great commandment (see BD, “Caesar,” 628; “Herodians,” 701–2; “Sadducees,” 767).
- 16 **Mark 12:41–44** At the temple treasury Jesus noticed a widow donating a mite (see BD, “Money,” 733–34).
- 17 **Matthew 23:1–36** Jesus warned the multitude about hypocrisy (see BD, “Scribe,” 770).
- 18 **Matthew 23:37–39** Jesus again lamented over Jerusalem.
- 19 **Matthew 24–25; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1** At the Mount of Olives Jesus taught His disciples about the destruction of Jerusalem and the signs of His Second Coming (see BD, “Christ,” 633; “Coming of Jesus Christ,” 648).



13 15 16 18



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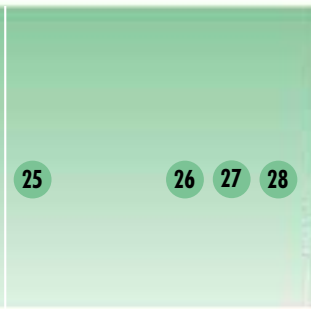
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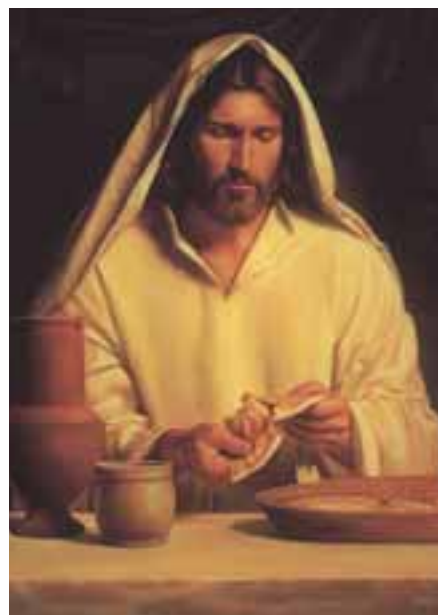


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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: DETAIL FROM CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, BY HARRY ANDERSON; O JERUSALEM, BY GREG OLSEN, FROM THE VISIONS OF FAITH COLLECTION BY MILL POND PRESS, INC., VENICE, FLORIDA; JUDAS BETRAYING JESUS WITH A KISS, BY JAMES J. TISSOT; IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME, BY WALTER RANE, COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART; THE LAST SUPPER, BY SIMON DEWEY, COURTESY OF ALTUS FINE ART, AMERICAN FORK, UTAH; FIVE OF THEM WERE WISE, BY WALTER RANE, COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART

- 20 **Matthew 25** Parables of the ten virgins, the talents, and the sheep and the goats (see BD, "Weights and Measures," 788–89).
- 21 **Matthew 26:1–2** Jesus told His disciples He would be crucified in two days.
- 22 **Matthew 26:3–5** Chief priests again conspired to kill Jesus.
- 23 **Matthew 26:6–13** Jesus visited the house of Simon the leper. A woman anointed Jesus in preparation for His death (see BD, "Simon," 775).
- 24 **Luke 22:3–6** Judas Iscariot arranged to betray Jesus to the chief priests (see BD, "Judas," 719).
- 25 **Luke 22:7–13** The disciples prepared an upper room for the Passover meal (see BD, "Feasts," 672–74).
- 26 **Luke 22:14–38** After sundown Jesus had His Last Supper with His Twelve Apostles.
- 27 **John 13:18–30** Jesus announced that one of His disciples would betray Him. Judas left the room.
- 28 **Mark 14:22–25** Jesus instituted the sacrament.
- 29 **John 13:2–17** Jesus washed the feet of the Apostles.
- 30 **John 13:31–35** Jesus taught His disciples and commanded them to love one another as He had loved them.

- 31 **Mark 14:27–31** Jesus' disciples pledged their loyalty to Him.
- 32 **John 14** Jesus testified of His divinity and taught of the Comforters (see BD, "Comforter," 648; "Holy Ghost," 704).
- 33 **Luke 22:39** Jesus and the disciples left for the Mount of Olives.
- 34 **John 15–16** Jesus taught His disciples of the true vine, love, opposition, and His imminent death (see BD, "Grace," 697).
- 35 **John 17** Jesus offered the Intercessory Prayer, praying to the Father for His Apostles and all who believe in Him through them.
- 36 **John 18:1** Jesus and His disciples arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane.
- 37 **Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:40–46** Jesus took Peter, James, and John into the garden; Jesus prayed; an angel comforted Him; Jesus found the three asleep; He prayed a second time; Jesus bled from every pore; the three still continued to sleep; He prayed a third time; Jesus woke His disciples (see BD, "Abba," 600; "Atonement," 617; "Gethsemane," 680).
- 38 **Luke 22:47–48; John 18:2–9** Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus with a kiss. Jesus' accusers fell to the ground.

Midnight

3:00 A.M.

6:00 A.M.

9:00 A.M.

Noon

3:00 P.M.

## EVENTS

39 41

44 45 46 47

49 51 53 55 56 58

59 60 61 62 63

## TRAVELS

42 43

50 52 54 57

## SERMONS

48

## MIRACLES

40

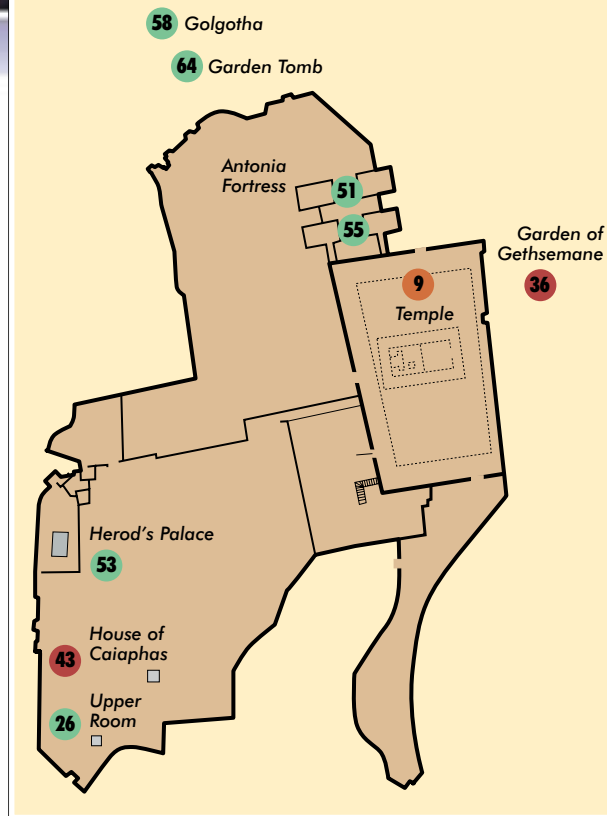
## PARABLES

## BOOK OF MORMON

81

- 39** **John 18:10–11** Peter tried to stop the arrest of Jesus.
- 40** **Luke 22:49–51** Jesus healed the ear of the high priest's servant.
- 41** **Mark 14:46, 48–52** Jesus was arrested; the disciples fled.
- 42** **John 18:13** Jesus was first taken to the palace of Annas (see BD, "Annas," 609).
- 43** **John 18:24** Jesus was sent to Caiaphas (see BD, "Caiaphas," 628).
- 44** **John 18:14–23** Caiaphas questioned Jesus; an officer struck Jesus in the face.
- 45** **Matthew 26:59–68** Members of the ruling council questioned, mocked, spat upon, and beat Jesus.
- 46** **Luke 22:56–62** Three times Peter denied knowing Jesus (see BD, "Peter," 749).
- 47** **Luke 22:66–67** At sunrise Jesus was questioned by the whole ruling council.
- 48** **Matthew 27:1; Luke 22:67–71** Jesus declared that He was the Son of God. He was condemned to death (see BD, "Blasphemy," 625–26).
- 49** **Matthew 27:3–10** Judas hanged himself (see BD, "Aceldama," 602; "Potter's Field," 752).
- 50** **John 18:28** Jesus was led to the Roman hall of judgment.

## JERUSALEM AT THE TIME OF JESUS



- 51** **John 18:29–38** Pilate questioned Jesus and found no fault in Him (see BD, "Pilate," 751; "Pontius," 752).
- 52** **Luke 23:6–7** Pilate sent Jesus to King Herod Antipas.
- 53** **Luke 23:8–12** Herod questioned and mocked Jesus (see BD, "Herod," 700–1).
- 54** **Luke 23:11** Jesus was sent back to Pilate.
- 55** **Luke 23:13–25** Pilate offered to release Jesus, but the people said, "Crucify him." Pilate released Barabbas (see BD, "Barabbas," 619).
- 56** **John 19:1–16** Jesus was whipped, had a crown of thorns placed on His head, was clothed in a purple robe, and was beaten by Roman soldiers. Pilate sought again to release Jesus, but the people wanted Him crucified.
- 57** **Mark 15:20–22** Jesus was led to Golgotha (see BD, "Calvary," 629; "Golgotha," 682).
- 58** **Mark 15:23–28; John 19:23–24** Jesus was nailed to the cross. Soldiers cast lots for His clothes (see BD, "Crucifixion," 651).
- 59** **Mark 15:29–32** Jesus was mocked as He hung on the cross.



# The Wondrous Restoration

BY ELDER NEAL A. MAXWELL Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

*Dazzling truths came through the Prophet Joseph Smith, including key truths lost for centuries.*



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CARY HENRIE

All of us are messengers who carry the message of the Restoration. We are not only to experience personal conversion, but we are to have personal enthusiasm! We can then do our work so much better, and, on occasion, others will have an experience similar to that of Brigham Young when humble

missionaries first testified to him. Brigham said, “Their testimony was like fire in my bones.”<sup>1</sup> On occasion you will teach people who will feel the Spirit “like fire in [their] bones.” I hope, therefore, to be able to add a few insights about the gospel and at least something to your enthusiasm as messengers of such a great message.

## Reasons for the Restoration

The great message of the Restoration, which came through the Prophet Joseph Smith, was actually prophesied centuries in advance. The words used to characterize it are interesting: “restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21), meaning restoration of all things. The times of restitution would also be “times of refreshing” (Acts 3:19), and also, as the Doctrine and Covenants tells us, it was done “that faith also might increase in the earth” (D&C 1:21). These are underlying descriptions of and reasons for the

great Restoration. Interestingly, centuries before Peter, Enoch was told that the Restoration would especially testify of Jesus and of the Resurrection (see Moses 7:62). These are the central things.

Therefore, we as Latter-day Saints cannot regard Jesus, as some do, as merely a “great moral teacher,” though He was the greatest, or even as a “minor prophet.” He is the Lord of the universe, as well as our Redeemer!

Even so, we must make no mistake about the cultural context into which you will deliver this great message. One eminent historian described today’s context when he said: “Among the advanced races, the decline and ultimately the collapse of the religious impulse would leave a huge vacuum. The history of modern times is in great part the history of how that vacuum had been filled. . . . In place of religious belief, there would be secular ideology.”<sup>2</sup>

No wonder the “restitution” is to have constituted a time of “refreshing.” No wonder that increased faith in Jesus is so sorely needed!

## A Refutation of Secular Society

Thus, the great Restoration is also a refutation of our increasingly doubting and secular society. Our society has its jaded cynicism, humdrum hedonism, and pleasure seeking, and it is swamped in situational ethics. No wonder some, unaware,









have been you for a long, long time!

We existed as individuals well before our mortal births. We are now and have been accountable for our choices!

Thus the doctrines of premortality and foreordination overturn incorrect traditions which hold that mortals were created “out of nothing” in an instant.

### **The Plurality of Worlds**

In June 1830 the first chapter of Moses was revealed. Joseph Smith called the first chapter of Moses a “precious morsel.”<sup>3</sup> This precious morsel expanded upon the Bible’s meager but still helpful verses concerning the plurality of worlds (see Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 1:2). Our planet, we know from the revelations, is but one among “worlds without number” (Moses 1:33), which “worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God” (D&C 76:24).

How many planets are there with people on them? We don’t know. There appear to be none in our own solar system, but we are not alone in the universe. We see the

universe differently and correctly. God is not the God of only one planet! We see how the perspective we have is expanded dramatically by the revelations of the Restoration.

### **God’s Character and Capacity**

Because of the Restoration, we see God’s character and capacity differently and correctly.

Joseph Smith taught that God sees the past, the present, and the future as if they were an “eternal now.” God foresaw human wickedness, and He has made “ample provision” for that wickedness so that He is still able to bring to pass

His purposes.<sup>4</sup> There are a lot of people who believe in a kind of god, but they are not sure he has the character or capacity to do anything that matters. Because they lack an understanding of God’s character and purposes, their faith is weak.

Through the Restoration we learn the following:

- Joseph Smith said, “If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves.”<sup>5</sup>
- God’s capacity is such that two times in two verses in the Book of Mormon, He reassures us

in a very polite but pointed way, “I am able to do mine own work” (2 Nephi 27:20–21). Is He ever!

- We are told in the book of Abraham about divine determination. “There is nothing that the Lord thy God shall take in his heart to do but what he will do it” (Abraham 3:17). In the times that lie ahead, this should be part of our faith in His capacity. It is part of our faith in His character. It is part of our understanding of His purposes.

- God’s attributes include perfect goodness and perfect mercy. We can come to have a knowledge of His goodness and His mercy. This is why Nephi, in the very first verse of the Book of Mormon, speaks of how he had “a great knowledge of the goodness . . . of God” (1 Nephi 1:1). May I submit to you that people who don’t know that fact are terribly deprived doctrinally. They call into question the purposes and trials of life. When we know that God is perfect in His goodness, it will sustain us through the vicissitudes of life.

**O**ur planet, we know from the revelations, is but one among “worlds without number.” We are not alone in the universe.

# THE BOOK OF MORMON

AN ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY  
THE HAND OF MORMON  
UPON PLATES  
TAKEN FROM THE PLATES OF NEPHI

**T**he Book of Mormon was not only translated by “the gift and power of God”; it was written and transmitted by “the gift and power of God.”

Without this vital knowledge about God’s character and purposes, skepticism swells! President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901) identified one root cause of today’s skepticism, saying, “There is in the plan of salvation, which God our heavenly Father has revealed, perfect love; mercy and justice, and every other attribute which pertains to the character of Deity are perfectly illustrated in the plan of salvation which he has revealed for man’s guidance.”<sup>6</sup>

However, President Cannon lamented, “The difficulty to-day is, that the people do not believe that God is a being of this character.”<sup>7</sup> We are so blessed to know so much more about not only His purposes but His character.

### The Book of Mormon

The Book of Mormon sits in the center of the Restoration as part of the great message of the Restoration.

Ponder this powerful yet frequently ignored quotation from the Prophet Joseph Smith concerning the title page of the Book of Mormon: “I wish to mention here that the title-page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, taken

from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated, . . . and that said title page is not . . . a modern composition, either of mine or of any other man who has lived or does live in this generation.”<sup>8</sup>

A marvelous testimony! The Book of Mormon is beyond the capacity of Joseph Smith or any other individual to have written. Why? Because it was not only *translated* by “the gift and power of God”; it was written and *transmitted* by “the gift and power of God.” It is special in so many ways that we in the Church have yet to inventory and appreciate fully. One of the reasons for its superb quality is explained by King Benjamin in his great sermon: “And the things which I shall tell you are made known unto me by an angel from God” (Mosiah 3:2). Such speech writing!

The Book of Mormon is thus infused with angelic excellence. But it tells us something further. The Book of Mormon also says, “Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ” (2 Nephi 32:3). How powerfully important the gift



of the Holy Ghost is if we would be tutored.

The process of translating the Book of Mormon was absolutely remarkable. Who was closest to the process besides Joseph? Oliver Cowdery. He was Joseph's mortal helper. Though he left the Church for a while, he came back to the Church, seeking no status. He gave strong testimony of the Book of Mormon. In fact, Oliver's final testimony, on his deathbed, spoke about the Book of Mormon. Of that experience, one of his family said: "Just before he breathed his last, [Oliver] asked to be raised up in bed so he could talk to the family and friends and he told them to live according to the teachings in the Book of Mormon, and they would meet him in Heaven. Then he said, 'Lay me down and let me fall asleep in the arms of Jesus,' and he fell asleep without a struggle."<sup>9</sup>

This last witness of Oliver Cowdery, who sat day by day having the Prophet dictate to him, was about the Book of Mormon.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has pointed out how Joseph Smith has brought forth more printed pages of scripture than did any other

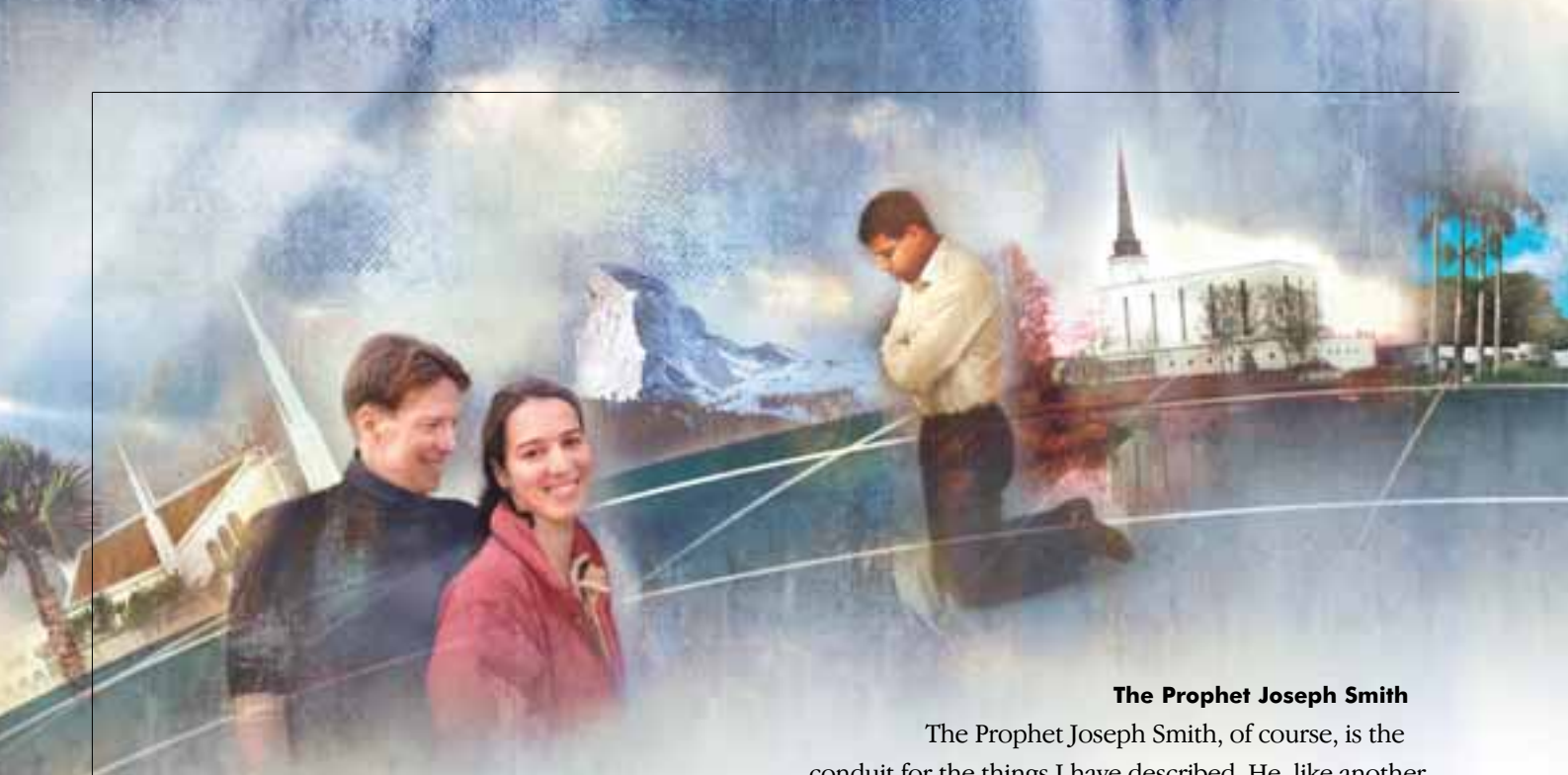
mortal. In fact, though untrained in theology, he accomplished something remarkable. Elder Holland has also observed that more pages came through Joseph Smith than from Moses, Paul, Luke, and Mormon combined!

#### **"Plain and Precious" Truths Revealed**

Not only is the Restoration's quantity highly impressive; its quality is stunning! Dazzling truths came through the Prophet Joseph, including key truths lost for centuries during the prophesied doctrinal famine as to the word of the Lord (see Amos 8:11). Furthermore, this famine, along with false doctrines, has caused many to "stumble exceedingly," just as the Book of Mormon prophesied (see 1 Nephi 13:34). By faulty transmission, many "plain and precious things" were "taken away" or "kept back" from reaching what later composed our precious Holy Bible (see 1 Nephi 13:34, 39–40). I testify to you, brothers and sisters, that these "plain and precious" doctrines were restored in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times, a time of refreshing.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is also in the unique position of knowing that there were different gospel dispensations. These dispensations began with Adam. One scripture says, "And thus the Gospel began to be preached, from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God, and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Moses 5:58).

Ponder this wonderful insight from President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), which underscores this uniqueness: "Undoubtedly the knowledge of this law and of other rites and ceremonies was carried by the posterity of Adam into all lands, and continued with them, more or less pure, to the flood, and through Noah, who was a 'preacher of righteousness,' to those who succeeded him, spreading out into all nations and countries, Adam and Noah being the first of their dispensations to receive them from God. What wonder, then, that we should find relics of Christianity, so to speak, among the heathens and nations who know not Christ, and whose histories date back beyond the days of Moses, and even beyond the flood, independent of and apart from the records of the Bible."<sup>10</sup>



This is why we sometimes find fragments of the whole truth in various cultures. The gospel was once a whole and precious totality, and then came the dispersion, diffusion, and distortion of these truths.

Thus the Restoration was part of God's generous and "ample provision" for His children. God's overarching purposes have been clearly revealed, including in that "precious morsel," Moses 1, where we read, "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (v. 39). You cannot find that kind of plain and precious verse in the wonderful book we know as the Holy Bible.

Not only has much more scripture come to us through the Restoration, but as we all know, "many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" will yet be revealed (see Articles of Faith 1:9). Among those things yet to be revealed one day will be the full book of Enoch. We have already, in the Restoration, received 18 times more than the meager data in the Bible concerning this great and prophetic figure of Enoch. Without the Restoration, we would not even know there was a city of Enoch!

Furthermore, one day the Bible and the Book of Mormon will be joined by the witnessing words of scripture from the lost tribes of Israel (see 2 Nephi 29:13). There will eventually be three witnesses, and we know this, again, from the revelations in the great Restoration.

### The Prophet Joseph Smith

The Prophet Joseph Smith, of course, is the conduit for the things I have described. He, like another prophet, served "notwithstanding [his] weakness" (2 Nephi 33:11). In fact, "out of [Joseph's] weakness he [was] made strong" (2 Nephi 3:13). The Prophet, in what must have been a wistful moment, said to the members of the Church in Nauvoo, "I never told you I was perfect; but there is no error in the revelations which I have taught."<sup>11</sup>

Ponder now these witnessing words of President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) about the Seer Joseph Smith. These were given in March 1897, in the very sunset of President Woodruff's ministry. He said with an aged but powerful voice: "I bear my testimony that in the early spring of 1844, in Nauvoo, the Prophet Joseph Smith called the Twelve Apostles together and he delivered unto them the ordinances of the Church and the kingdom of God; and all the keys and powers that God had bestowed upon him, he sealed upon our heads. . . . I am the only man now living in the flesh who heard that testimony from his mouth, and I know this was true by the power of God manifest to him."

President Woodruff continues: "At that meeting, he stood on his feet for about three hours and taught us the things of the kingdom. His face was as clear as amber, and he was covered with a power that I have never seen in any man in the flesh before."<sup>12</sup>

Joseph Smith, as Elder B. H. Roberts wrote, lived "in crescendo!"<sup>13</sup> Indeed he did. Near the mortal end, looking back upon his stress-filled, task-filled years, the Prophet said: "I don't blame any one for not believing my history. If I had not experienced what I have, I would not have believed it myself."<sup>14</sup>



In your testimonies of Joseph, therefore, make allowance for how much came through him, more at times than he could have immediately and fully comprehended. Make allowance for the fact that his enemies, even in today's world, produce a constant pattern of accusation, but it is followed by eventual vindication regarding the work of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He began as "an obscure boy . . . of no consequence in the world . . . doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor" (Joseph Smith—History 1:22–23). Now, however, just as prophesied, "the ends of the earth shall inquire after [his] name" (D&C 122:1).

### Blessings of the Restoration

Sobered and humbled by the grandeur of the Restoration and all that it brings to us, there should be times when you and I leave tears on our pillows out of gratitude for what God has given us. We know about the three-act dimension of the plan of salvation—and more. We are blessed to bear testimony of the great Restoration and to bear testimony of the Book of Mormon and of the work of the Prophet Joseph Smith. And so it should not surprise us that the most faithful among us are, indeed, the quietly meek and submissive souls who meet the challenges of life buoyed up by the doctrines of the Restoration.

We are blessed to know things that simply transform the landscape of life. In the felicitous words of Jacob, this knowledge enables us to see "things as they really are" and "as they really will be" (Jacob 4:13). There must be not only the

**W**e are blessed to know things that simply transform the landscape of life. In the felicitous words of Jacob, this knowledge enables us to see "things as they really are" and "as they really will be."

Spirit as we deliver the message of the Restoration but also the enthusiasm of our own testimonies. By that I do not mean emotional extravagance but rather the quiet enthusiasm in which people, as did Brigham Young, can feel your testimony like fire in their bones.

We must go forward in such a great cause, borne up by our own witnesses and with the enthusiasm which can prove to be contagious for this, the work of the great Restoration—a time of refreshing, a time of restitution, and a time of quiet faith. This is His work, of which I give apostolic witness. ■

### NOTES

1. "Remarks," *Deseret News*, 2 Oct. 1861, 177.
2. Paul Johnson, *Modern Times* (1983), 48.
3. *History of the Church*, 1:98.
4. See *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 220.
5. *Teachings*, 343.
6. "Discourse," *Deseret News*, 31 Jan. 1872, 609.
7. "Discourse," *Deseret News*, 2 Apr. 1873, 132.
8. *History of the Church*, 1:71.
9. Lucy Cowdery Young, letter, 7 Mar. 1887, Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
10. "Discourse," *Deseret News*, 19 Feb. 1873, 36.
11. *History of the Church*, 6:366.
12. Typescript of statement on graphophone, 19 Mar. 1897, Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
13. In Joseph Smith, *Teachings*, 356, footnote.
14. *History of the Church*, 6:317.

*Adapted from an address given 22 June 1999 at a seminar for new mission presidents, Missionary Training Center, Provo, Utah.*

# Easter

## IN THE VALLEY OF THE SUN

Every April for 65 years, the Mesa Arizona Temple grounds have become the hillsides of Judea, the streets of Jerusalem, and the olive groves of Gethsemane as more than 700 volunteers work together to produce the annual Mesa Arizona Easter pageant, *Jesus the Christ*. Started as an Easter sunrise service atop an old cotton wagon, the pageant, now an evening program, draws thousands of spectators every year to both English and Spanish performances.

“Many families have a long tradition of coming year after year as a special celebration of Easter,” says pageant director Nanci Wudel. “Some even plan family reunions to coincide with the pageant.”

Supervised by the Church’s Missionary Department, the pageant represents a massive outreach by the Latter-day Saint community in the greater Phoenix area. “Our purpose is to bring people to Christ by bearing testimony that He lives,” explains Sister Wudel. And they are successful as family after family gains a renewed faith in the Savior and the desire to know more about His gospel.

But Latter-day Saint cast members are blessed as much as spectators. “It is like having the best family home evening every day of the week!” comments Lee Pace, whose entire family of 10 participated in the 2002 pageant.

As the actor portraying Jesus Christ ascends above the 400 cast members and 19,000 spectators at the end of each performance, all eyes are drawn to the white figure framed by the lighted Mesa temple and the dark Arizona

skies. The scene plays out the Savior’s own words, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12).

In the end, love of Jesus Christ underscores the entire pageant. From costume designer to cast member, says Sister Wudel, all “volunteer their time and talents each year for one reason—their love for the Savior.” ■

*Brian K. Kelly, Highland 19th Ward, Highland Utah West Stake, and Naomi Frandsen, BYU 154th Ward, Brigham Young University Second Stake*

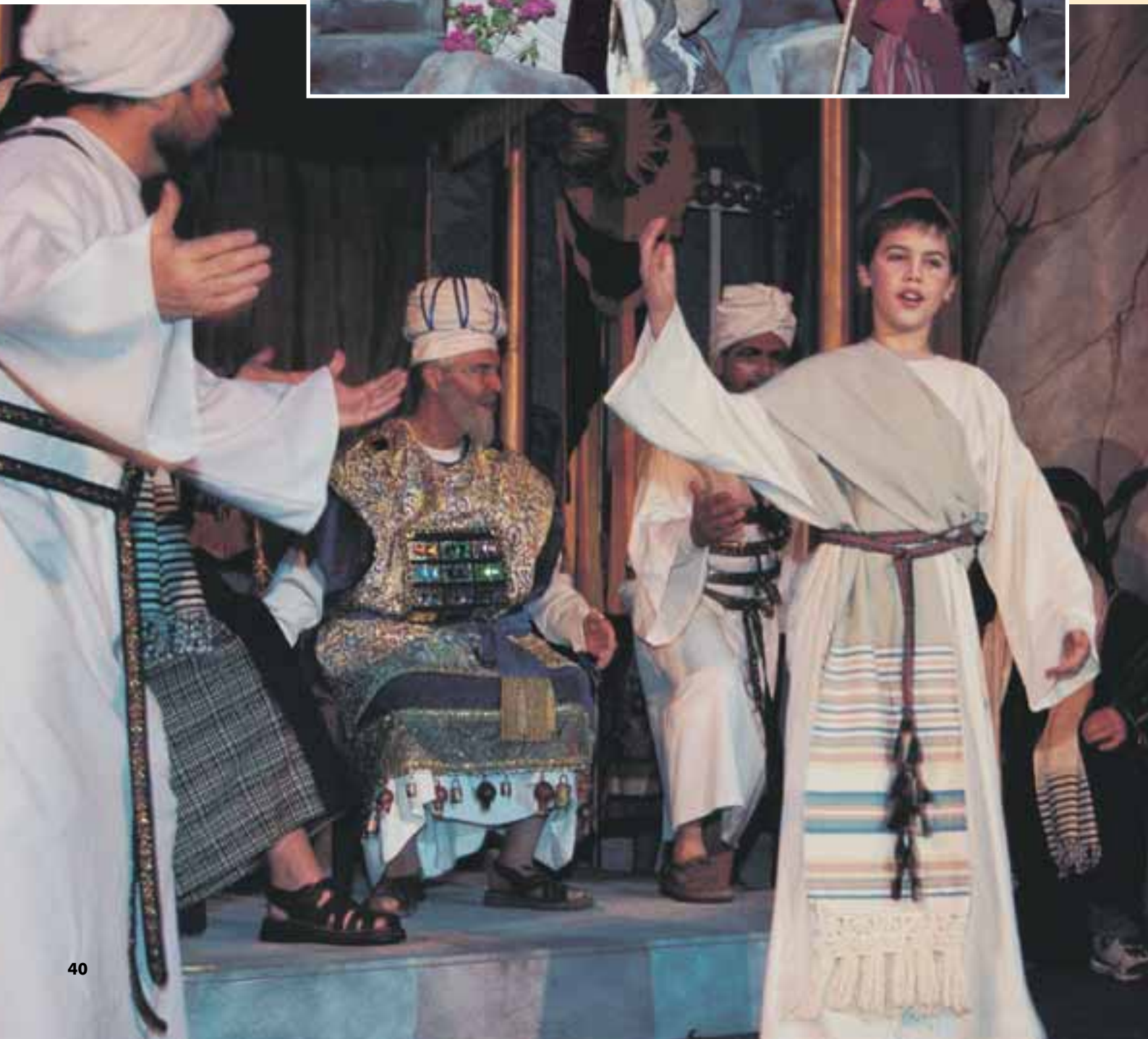
**Right: Cast member Georgina Uribe and her daughter, Scarlett, age 2, model authentically designed costumes for the pageant. Below: The Mesa Arizona Temple and Visitors’ Center grounds provide a peaceful setting for audience and cast members.**







**Right: Shepherds receive the good news of Christ's birth.**  
**Below: Young Jesus' preaching astonishes teachers at the temple in Jerusalem.**



## Answers from the Pageant

BY JINEANE KING

I had been a television broadcaster for 20 years and was anchoring the evening news for a Phoenix, Arizona, station when I was introduced to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. After several discussions, the sister missionaries issued the baptismal challenge to me and my husband, Neil. But while I wanted to accept the challenge and move forward, I also had some fears.

When my father learned of my interest in the LDS Church, he and a friend pummeled me with an onslaught of negative propaganda, including allegations that Latter-day Saints worship a “different” Jesus. Although many of the accusations seemed absurd, I didn’t know how to defend my new faith. The reporter in me wanted answers, but I could only cry “Not true! Not true!” without any proof to back up my feelings.

About this time, our neighbors invited us to attend the “must-see” Mesa Arizona Easter pageant. It was a rainy, cold night when we arrived, but during the opening prayer, the rain suddenly stopped. Immediately, I felt strongly that we were in the right place.

The rest of the evening taught me how much the Latter-day Saints did indeed believe in Jesus Christ. In fact, the script was all taken from the very Bible I had grown up with! As I watched scene after beautiful scene, I had the overwhelming feeling that right there in front of me, on that huge stage, were the very answers I had been searching for.

When the pageant ended, I left the temple grounds feeling as if I were floating on air. I knew I had the power and the strengthened resolve to face my father and his friend and to answer every one of their allegations. My growing testimony had the reinforcement it needed, and I knew I was going in the right direction.

With newfound courage, I pressed forward in my new faith, and less than a month later, my husband and I were baptized. A year later, my husband and I found ourselves once again at the pageant—this time with my co-anchors from the television station. Now we were the missionaries, sharing with our friends the changing power and spirit of the life of our Savior Jesus Christ. ■

*Jineane King is a member of the Harris Second Ward, Mesa Arizona Central Stake.*



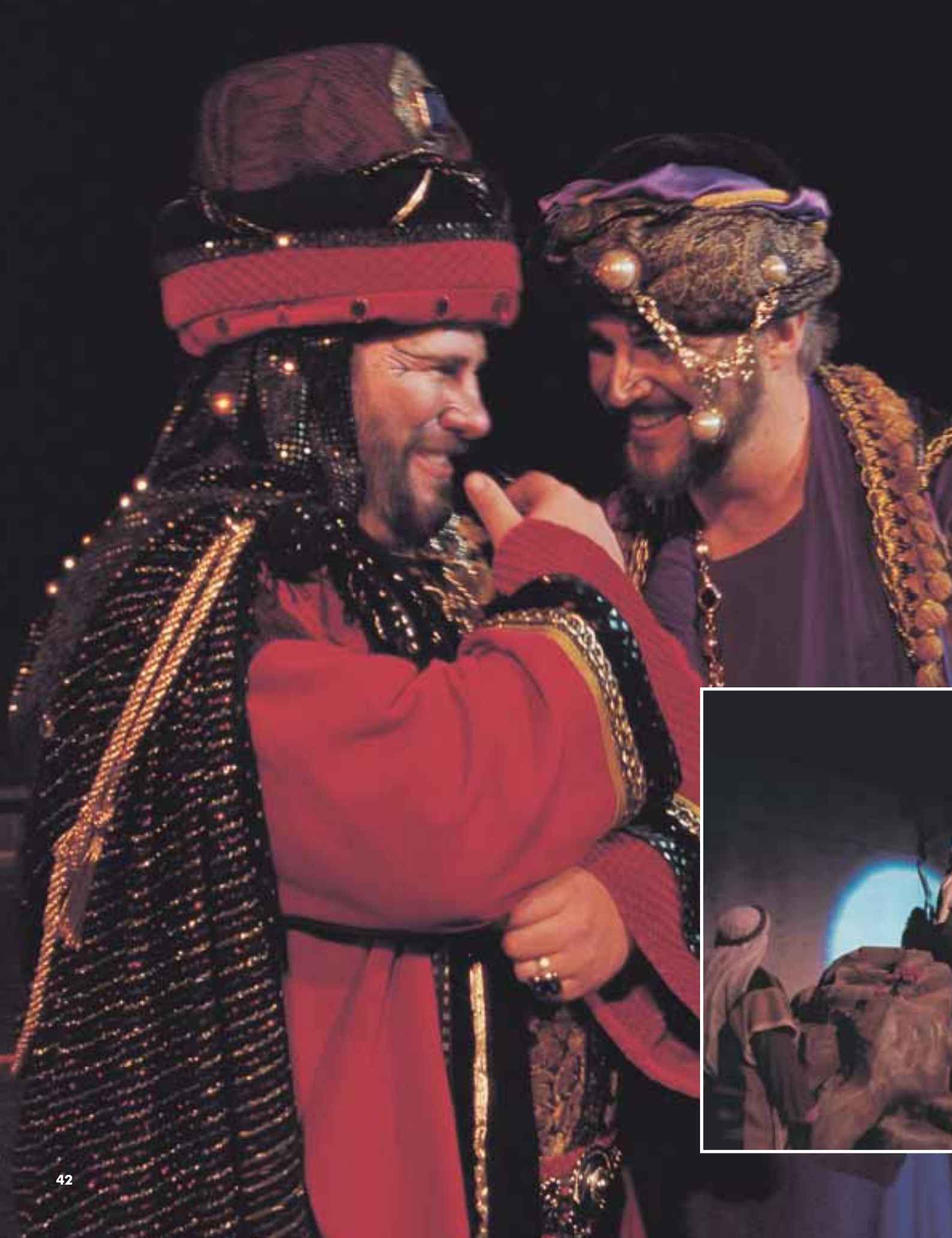
**The pageant taught Jineane King how much Latter-day Saints really do believe in Jesus Christ.**



**Mary and Joseph gaze at the infant Jesus.**

### Pageant at a Glance

- **In 2002 it was the largest annual outdoor Easter pageant in the world.**
- **The script has been drawn exclusively from the Holy Bible to appeal to audiences of all Christian faiths.**
- **An 80-member Hispanic media public affairs committee was formed in 2002, and over 14,000 attended the two Spanish performances.**
- **Every Phoenix television station, including three Spanish-language stations, carried television coverage to a prospective viewing audience of 1.5 million.**
- **Cast members rehearse weeknights and Saturdays for one month before performances.**
- **The stage management, costumes, makeup, construction, lighting, sound, and security are provided by volunteers.**
- **Thirty stakes from Mesa, Gilbert, Chandler, Tempe, and Scottsdale provide, transport, and set up 10,000 chairs before opening night.**
- **Music for the soundtrack is by the London Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestra at Temple Square, and the Utah State University Chamber Singers.**
- **The 9,600-square-foot stage can hold 500 cast and crew members plus sheep, donkeys, doves, miniature horses, and other animals.**



## Converted on a Cross

BY MARK LAYTON

When my mother arranged for our family to audition for the Mesa Arizona Easter pageant, she never guessed that her 20-year-old son would be cast as an angel. But two weeks after auditions, I was wearing an enormous, floor-length, white satin costume with huge draping sleeves and practicing modified ballet moves as the choreographer called, “Now gracefully sweep your right arm to the left, right crossover with the leg, and raise both arms up elegantly.”

I would be turning 21 shortly, and a mission was somewhere in the distance. When I became “number 434” at the auditions, I

**Left: Derisive Sadducees mock Jesus’ teachings. Below: Jesus relates the parable of the ten virgins to His Apostles.**



didn’t suspect that this pageant would change those undefined plans.

Shortly after I became a dancing angel, a director informed me of a “slight modification.” She told me she had been awakened several times the night before with a dream that number 434 should be a thief on the cross, not an angel. I willingly switched my white dress for a loincloth and shorts.

By opening night, every line and song had become routine to me. As I climbed on my cross and slipped my arms into the rope restraints before the crucifixion scene, I thought casually, “It’s show time.”

But during the eight performances in which I hung next to the actor portraying Jesus Christ, something began to happen in my heart. As the lightning and thunder depicted the end of His earthly mission, the story of Jesus that I had known since Primary was becoming real to me. I felt the

Savior’s love like the night air around me. With that understanding as a catalyst, I sent in my mission papers the next month and soon received a call to the Canada Toronto Mission.

Although I never played the role of an angel, it took another kind of angel, my mother, to help me change my life through the Easter pageant. Since the pageant and during my mission, the scriptures have come alive to me as I receive continual witnesses of the reality of my Savior’s life. ■

*Mark Layton is a member of the Mesa 70th Ward, Mesa Arizona East Stake.*



**Mark Layton was cast as one of the thieves being crucified next to Christ.**



**Dancers help depict the parable of the ten virgins.**



**Cristi Smith learned about the Church through her neighbors and the pageant.**

## *My Neighbors' Church*

BY CRISTI SMITH

I was raised in a religious home, but I didn't know any Latter-day Saints until my husband and I moved to Phoenix, Arizona. Although we were staying with my ailing mother, I worried about finding a good neighborhood in which to raise our three children.

One difficult day, I found myself driving aimlessly and pleading to God for help.

When I felt calmer, I found myself in a neighborhood I had never seen before. As I pulled onto the street where we would later purchase our home, I felt an overwhelming sense of peace.

Our new neighbors were amazingly hospitable. "What can we do to help?" they asked continually, and soon after we arrived, a neighbor brought us a hot loaf of bread. I remarked to my sister that our neighbors must be Christians, and I later discovered that, indeed,



many of our neighbors had one thing in common: they were Latter-day Saints.

Overwhelmed by our neighbors' kindness, I awoke my husband one night and said that if all of these wonderful people belonged to one church, we needed to look into it. The very next day, missionaries knocked on our door and invited us to the Mesa Arizona Easter pageant.

As we watched the depiction of Christ's Resurrection, my husband asked

incredulously, "You mean, Jesus died and then came back?" In amazement, I realized he was just learning the story of Christ. After the pageant, we wanted to know more about the gospel. As the missionaries taught us and we attended Sunday meetings, I felt the Church's positive influence.

One day during a game of Name That Tune, my son whistled an unfamiliar song. When I finally gave up, he said, "It's 'Follow the Prophet.' That's my favorite song" (see *Children's Songbook*, 110). His words left me stunned and anxious to talk with my husband about the incident.

"Will our life be better with or without the Church?" I asked him. After a year of investigating, we were baptized.

Our gospel knowledge is still a work in progress, but each day our testimonies grow stronger. We will be forever grateful for that night when the reenactment of the life and mission of Jesus Christ became an eternal turning point for our family. ■

*Cristi Smith is a member of the Groves Ward, Mesa Arizona Mountain View Stake.*



**Jesus Christ prays in the Garden of Gethsemane.**



**Roman soldiers take Christ to be questioned by Pilate.**



**Far left: Jesus Christ serves His disciples at the Last Supper. Left: Peter denies that he was with Jesus Christ.**

# “Draw Near



*Through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved from the separations that limit our joy and restrict our progress.*

**BY ELDER LINDON J. ROBISON**

Area Authority Seventy

I believe separations cause most of our sorrows. Likely most of us have our own stories to tell about painful separations. For me, one poignant memory involves the day I left home to begin my college education. I recall with sorrow that before I left, my mother and I had a disagreement. I don't remember the reason, but I know I said something that hurt her feelings. As a result, she did not accompany my father and me to Logan, Utah, where I began my freshman year at Utah State University. In those first few days away from home, I experienced an aching loneliness because of the emotional distance that existed between my mother and me and the physical separation between my family and me. Although I later made friends at school and resolved the conflict with my mother, the feelings of loneliness I experienced with that separation are still poignant to me.

Another separation that is seared into my soul occurred many years later. By then I was married to my sweetheart, Bonnie, and we had become parents for the first time and were living in Illinois, where I was attending graduate school. An opportunity came for Bonnie and me to make a trip to Utah, where we would be able to introduce our son to his grandparents.

We had a wonderful visit, and then, all too soon, it was time to leave. As Dad and Mom

accompanied us to the car to say good-bye, a strange feeling came over me that this was the last time I would see my father alive. I didn't want to go. I had depended on Dad throughout my life for counsel and support. Besides Bonnie, he and Mom were my best friends, and the thought that we would be separated filled me with an almost overwhelming sadness. Dad may also have sensed the coming separation, because for the first time that I could remember, he had tears in his eyes. A few short months later, we received a telephone call telling us that Dad had died of a sudden heart attack.

Now, many years later, Bonnie and I are facing other kinds of separations. For example, we have watched our children leave home for missions and school and begin their own families. We are coming to better understand in a small way what Heavenly Father must experience when His children leave their heavenly home to begin their mortal education.

But none of the separations described thus far inflict the kind of pain that results from sin. Sin separates us from the presence of the Lord and the influence of the Holy Ghost. I conclude that our most painful separations are those that exist between ourselves and God and between ourselves and our more Christlike natures.



# *unto Me”*



### **The Good News of the Gospel**

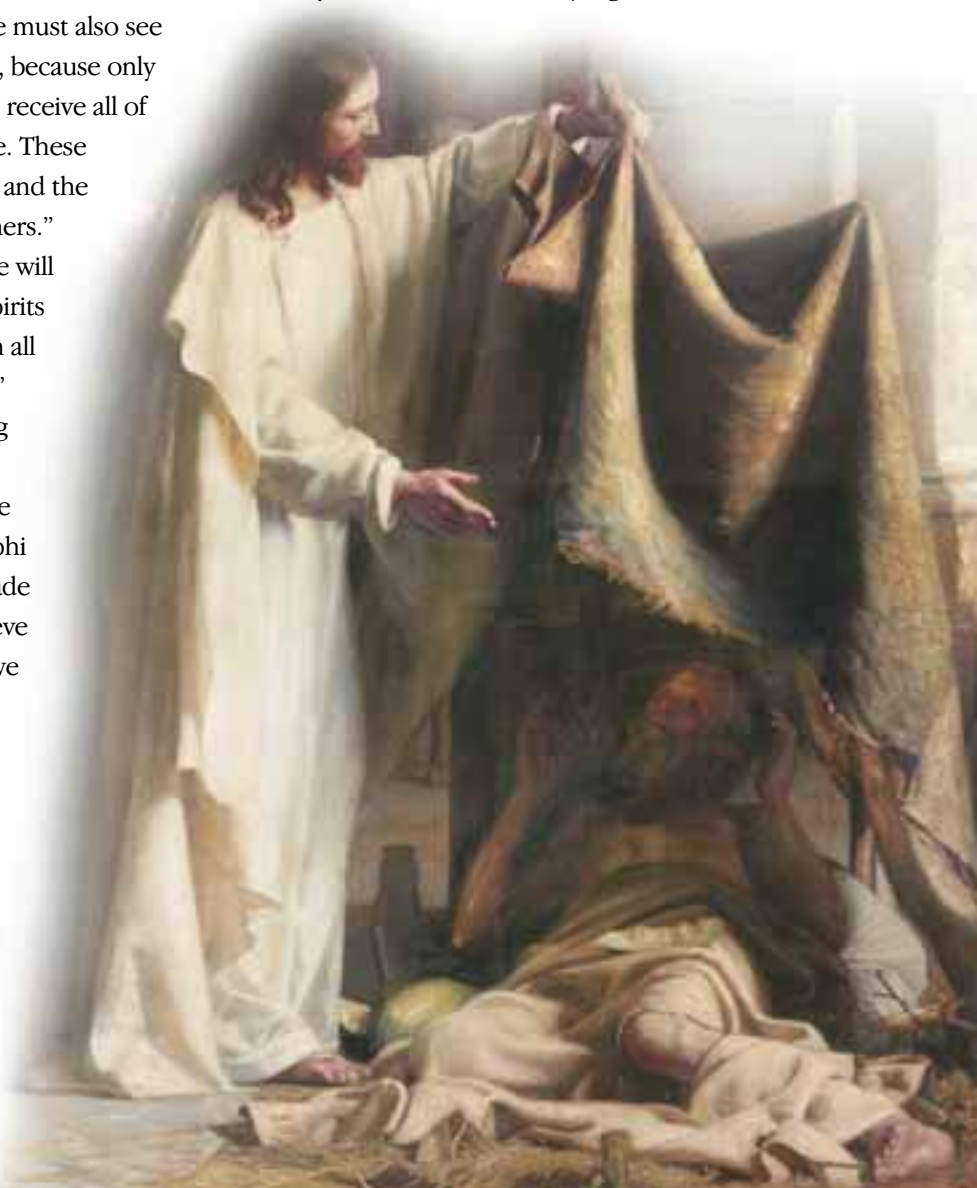
One definition of the word *gospel* is “good news.” The good news is that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved from the separations that limit our joy and restrict our progress. When such separations are caused by sin, we are required to repent—a process that can be painful and arduous. But at the end of that process, how sweet are the blessings of being cleansed from sin and declared worthy to enter Heavenly Father’s presence.

Shortly after I was called to serve as president of the Lansing Michigan Stake, my counselors and I wrote a statement of purpose that we hoped would guide our efforts. The introduction to that statement read: “The essence of the gospel is the Atonement of Jesus Christ. As we come to see the importance of the Atonement, we must also see the need to live the principles of the gospel, because only by living the principles of the gospel can we receive all of the blessings the Atonement makes possible. These blessings include being one with the Father and the Son, with our Christlike selves, and with others.”

Because of Christ’s Atonement, all people will be resurrected and have their bodies and spirits reunited. This is a universal gift. “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). However, overcoming spiritual death and becoming reunited with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ require the Savior’s grace and our own best efforts. Nephi stated, “For we labor diligently to . . . persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23). Grace magnifies our own efforts to “draw near unto” Christ (D&C 88:63) and enables us to do things we could not do on our own. It aids us as we engage in the following actions, all of which help us overcome our separation from the Father and the Son and become one with Them.

**Practice the first principles and ordinances of the gospel.** The first principles and ordinances of the gospel are what we do to formally accept the blessings of Christ’s Atonement. They require that we exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that we repent by turning away from sin and turning to the commandments of God, and that we receive the ordinances of baptism and the laying on of hands to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (see Articles of Faith 1:4). The Savior amplified our understanding of the first principles and ordinances with these words:

“And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world. . . .

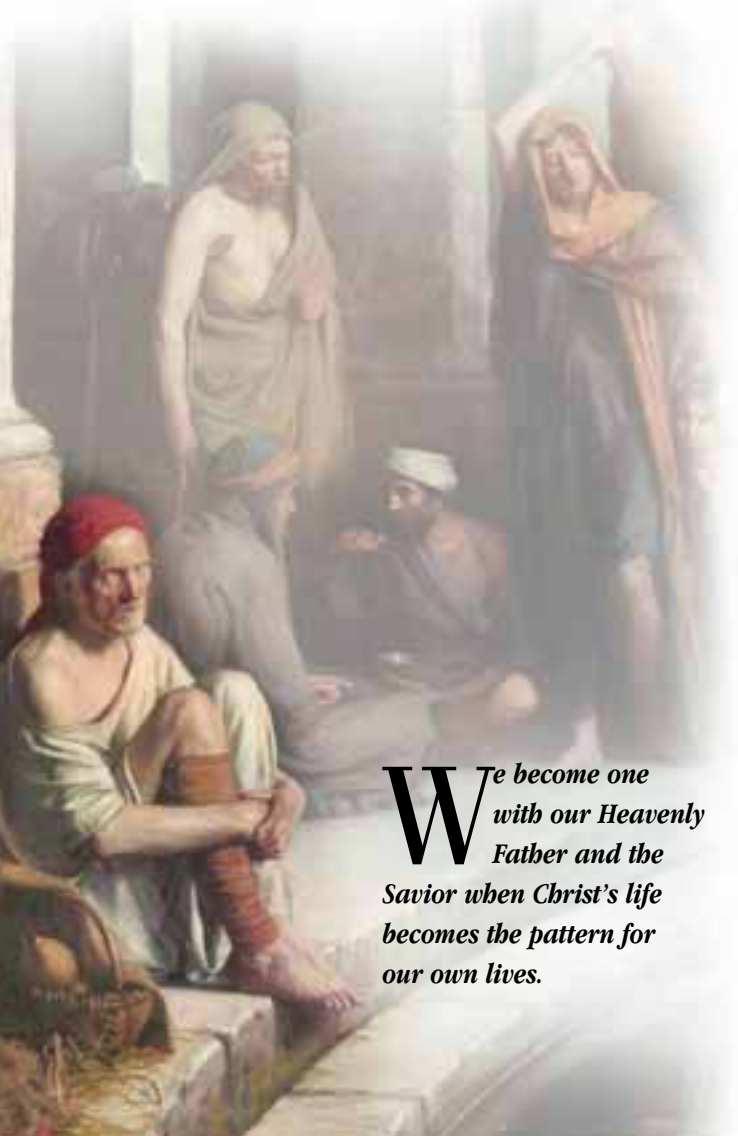


POOL OF BETHESDA, BY CARL HEINRICH BLOCH, ©COURTESY OF BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

“Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day” (3 Nephi 27:16, 20).

**Let the Father’s will be our own.** In the crucible of Gethsemane, Christ prayed, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me” (Matthew 26:39). Then He yielded His will to that of His Father with His declaration, “Not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). The will of the Father was the will of the Savior. The Lord’s unity with the Father led Him to declare, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30).

We become one with our Heavenly Father and the Savior when Their will becomes our will. Like Christ, we



**W**e become one with our Heavenly Father and the Savior when Christ’s life becomes the pattern for our own lives.

must be willing to declare, “Not my will, but thine, be done.”

**Follow the Savior’s example.**

As disciples of Christ, we should follow His example, just as He followed the example of His Father. Christ declared, “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do” (John 5:19). His commitment to follow the example of His Father led Him to teach, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father”

(John 14:9). We become one with our Heavenly Father and the Savior when Christ’s life becomes the pattern for our own lives.

**Become one with others.** As we pattern our lives after Christ, we experience increased love for others. King Benjamin noted that once we “have known of [God’s] goodness and have tasted of his love, and have received a remission of [our] sins,” we then “will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due” (Mosiah 4:11, 13). In addition, we will provide for our children and teach them to obey the laws of God, to refrain from fighting and quarreling, and to love and serve others. Once we have tasted of the love of God, we too will reach out to succor those in need (see Mosiah 4:14–16). We can serve others and express our love to them by sharing the gospel with them and also by opening the door to gospel opportunities for the deceased by performing sacred temple ordinances for them.

The desire to lead others to the joy we feel comes naturally to those who partake of the sweet peace the gospel brings (see *Hymns*, no. 14). After the prophet Lehi partook of the fruit of the tree of life, he desired that his family might also partake (see 1 Nephi 8:12). The importance of sharing the fruit of the tree of life with others is taught by the Lord in blessings given to John and Peter Whitmer: “And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which



**L**ike Christ, we must be willing to say, “Not my will, but thine, be done.”

CHRIST IN GETHSEMANE, BY HARRY ANDERSON

will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father” (D&C 15:6; 16:6).

**Do for others what we ask Heavenly**

**Father to do for us.** We become one with our Heavenly Father, the Savior, and our better selves when, insofar as we are able, we do for others what we ask Heavenly Father to do for us. This might be called the celestial rule. We pray for forgiveness; Christ asks us to forgive those who have trespassed against us. We pray for comfort when we mourn; Christ asks us to succor others who need comfort. We pray for help in achieving our worthy goals; Heavenly Father and the Son ask us to find joy in the success of others. We pray that our burdens may be light; Heavenly Father and Christ ask us to dedicate our lives to the service of others. We pray that we may one day return to the presence of our Heavenly Father; Christ asks us to open our homes and hearts to Heavenly Father’s children. If we will do for one another what we pray that the Father will do for us, He will declare, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40).

**Enter into sacred covenants with the Lord.** When we partake of the sacrament, we promise to take upon ourselves the name of Christ, to always remember Him, and to keep His commandments. He promises that if we keep our covenants, He will bless us with His Spirit (see Moroni 4:3; 5:2). When we receive the Holy Ghost, we are one with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Other covenants include those associated with the priesthood and the temple.

**Always remember Him.** I feel honored that my parents chose to name me after my father. It causes me to remember him often, and I am careful to avoid those things that would tarnish his good name. Similarly, Helaman named



ILLUSTRATION BY KEITH LARSON

**I**f we will do for one another what we pray that the Father will do for us, He will declare, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

his sons Nephi and Lehi so they would remember their noble ancestors and seek to follow their example (see Helaman 5:6). As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we carry the Lord’s name. When we pray, when we sing hymns, when we partake of the sacrament, when we read the scriptures, when we see a beautiful sunset, we remember our Savior and our Father in Heaven, and we are one with them.

As King Benjamin concluded his great sermon, he taught the importance of remembering: “If ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. *And now, O man, remember, and perish not*” (Mosiah 4:30;

emphasis added).

**A Righteous People**

We can be one with God, with our Christlike selves, and with others who have similar desires as we learn and practice correct principles—those practiced by a righteous people. We find correct principles taught in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We act upon them as we serve our brothers and sisters and work to redeem the dead.

All of these opportunities to be one lead us to proclaim the gospel message of joy recorded by the Prophet Joseph Smith: “Now, what do we hear in the gospel which we have received? A voice of gladness! A voice of mercy from heaven; and a voice of truth out of the earth; glad tidings for the dead; a voice of gladness for the living and the dead; glad tidings of great joy. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that bring glad tidings of good things, and that say unto Zion: Behold, thy God reigneth!” (D&C 128:19). ■

*Elder Lindon J. Robison is an Area Authority Seventy serving in the North America Northeast Area.*



# The Great Supper

*Four modern applications teach us how to be better guests and servants at the Lord's feast.*

BY ELDER F. MELVIN HAMMOND  
Of the Seventy

While I served as a mission president in Bolivia years ago, Sister Hammond and I gathered all of the new native-born Bolivian missionaries to our home for dinner. From the scattered villages of their native land they came, humble and dedicated.

Following a brief meeting, each was ushered into the dining room, where a feast awaited. The table had been carefully set, and each plate was filled with scrumptious fare. The meal was gratefully received, and every last crumb was eaten.

As I have reflected upon this experience, it is significant to me that when we extended the invitation all our guests gladly and promptly accepted and that afterward they left the feast filled with immense gratitude, eager to continue their work.

#### **"That My House May Be Filled"**

Contrast this with what happened in the Savior's parable of the great supper. "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many" (Luke 14:16). All those initially invited to the feast appear to have promised to attend. However, when the day for the feast came and servants were sent to announce that everything was ready, one by one





POSED BY MODELS

***We must not delay or wait to take our seats at the Lord's table.***

each of the invited guests declined, making such excuses as: "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it," "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them," "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come" (see Luke 14:18–20).

It is obvious they did not truly desire to attend the feast and had little love for the man. They failed to follow through on their initial commitment, creating the possibility that the man's substantial investment of time, effort, and money would be wasted.

The man was angry and commanded his servants to bring into his home "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt [lame], and the blind" from the streets and alleys of the city (Luke 14:21). Graciously they all accepted his invitation and came, yet there were still many empty places at his table for additional guests. The man sent his servants beyond the walls of the city, to "the highways and hedges" of the countryside to invite, even urge, all to come to the feast (Luke 14:23; see footnote c). Finally his house was filled with guests. The man then made this emphatic, final pronouncement concerning those who would not come: "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper" (Luke 14:24).

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a feast of such quality and purity that the prophet Nephi said "it is the most desirable above all things . . . and the most joyous to the soul" (1 Nephi 11:22–23). So why wouldn't everyone come and be filled? I offer four principles that seem applicable to our everyday lives.

**Make No Delay**

We often must make significant changes in our lives in order to attend the feast at the table of the Lord. Too many of us put those changes off, thinking there is no urgency. Perhaps this parable could be called the "don't bother me now, Lord" parable. We try to excuse ourselves in various ways. Each rationalization comes from selfishness and almost always relates to something temporal. For some it is the Word of Wisdom. For others it is the law of tithing. Perhaps it is a reluctance to live the law of chastity. Whatever the reason, we who reject or delay our response to the Savior's invitation show our lack of love for Him who is our King.

The prophet Amulek has warned us, "I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed" (Alma 34:33). When the invitation to feast is extended and received, we must not delay or wait to take our seat at His table.

**A Continual Feast**

Some who have accepted the gospel by being baptized do not continue to enjoy the feast. Once we have come to the Lord's table, let us not leave too early!

Continuing to feast on the good things of the gospel means we will keep the commandments, attend our meetings, and contribute to the happiness of those around us by being good neighbors and friends.

**Preparing the Feast**

The role of the man's servants in the parable of the great supper is an aspect of the story we seldom think about. Contemplating this, I wrote the following parable: A certain man possessing many riches and desiring to share them with all his friends planned a feast with food and drink. His servants were given instructions, and preparations were made. In the evening the guests arrived hungry, looking forward to being fed. The hall

was spacious and the tables beautifully set. But the cups were empty and only crumbs were spread upon the plates. The guests left hungering and thirsting, their loyalty shaken, not anxious to return. And the king wept because his servants, they who had professed total allegiance and obedience to him, did not perform their duties as expected.

We who have the responsibility to serve, train, and teach in the home or at church sometimes come to our tasks unprepared. Our children or students want to be spiritually fed but frequently go away still hungering and thirsting for the things of the Spirit of God. Every parent and teacher in the Church—whether in Sunday School, Primary, Relief Society, Young Men, Young Women, a priesthood quorum, or even on the music committee—who is not prepared to feed his or her “guests” runs the risk of leaving the Lord’s children hungry. However, when adequate preparation is made and the Spirit is invited, everyone may leave the meeting edified and rejoicing in the Lord (see D&C 50:22).

### **The Supper of the Lord**

There are also many who come to the great supper with joy and truly feast. They never grow tired of the meal that is offered. For the food is the Bread of Life and the drink is the Living Water.

One lovely day as I walked from the temple to the Missionary Training Center in Mexico City, two sisters stopped to say hello. They were being trained to serve full-time missions for the Lord. I questioned them about their families. Both were widows, their

children all grown. Both were grandmothers. To my amazement one of the women was the mother of 14 children. Tears filled my eyes as she told me that each one of her children had served a full-time mission. Now the last missionary was home and happily married.

Her children had met together in a family council and decided that since their mother had provided a way for each of them to serve a mission, it was now their turn to provide for her, so they pooled their resources. This dear sister visited with the bishop of her ward, and after several weeks her call finally came from the living prophet of God. Could there be anything sweeter than this? My humble prayer is that we will come to the feast of the Lord and be filled, that His words will lead us back into His presence in the celestial kingdom to feast with all of our loved ones at the table of the Father and the Son forever. ■

**E**very parent and teacher in the Church who is not prepared to feed his or her “guests” the things of the Spirit of God runs the risk of leaving the Lord’s children hungry.





# God Had His Own Plans for Me

BY ROCHELLE WELTY AND JAN PINBOROUGH

*Little by little, the Lord has helped Annapurna Guru Murala, a young woman in India, fulfill her dreams and His plans for her.*

A girl's journal is often a record of her dreams, and Annapurna Guru's journal held her most cherished desire. "Someday," she wrote, "I will go to the temple."

Annapurna was not a member of the Church when she wrote these words. Raised in Hyderabad, India, she had learned something about Christianity as a child in a Catholic school. Then, in 1992, her older brother met Latter-day Saint missionaries and was baptized. Annapurna was 14 when her brother, Murthy, gave her a copy of the Book of Mormon. "Once I read it," she recalls, "I felt it was true."

Annapurna found in the gospel answers to her most troubling questions, especially her worry about what happens after death. But just as surely as she knew the gospel to be true, she knew something else: Her parents would not allow her to be baptized in a Christian church.

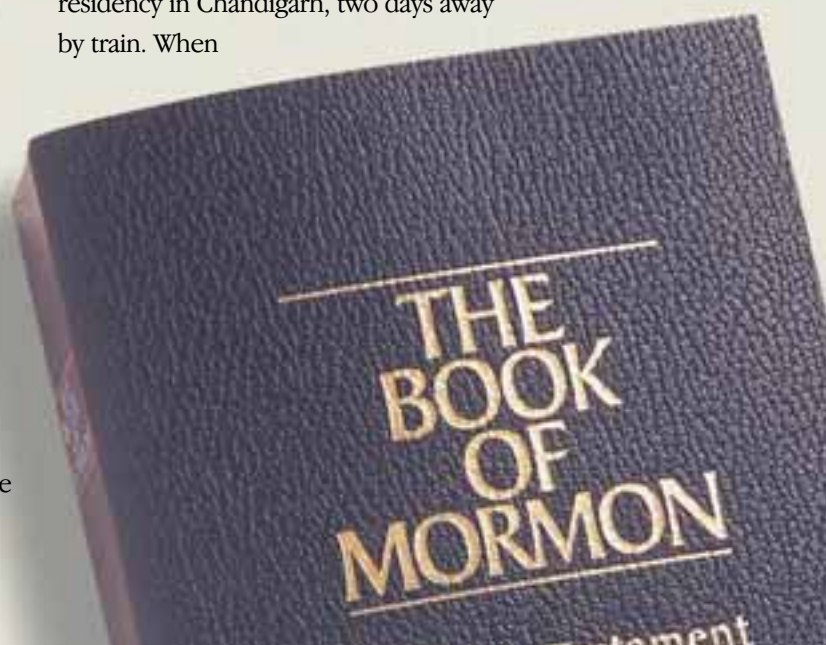
During her remaining teenage years, Annapurna lived her new faith quietly. She read the Book of Mormon and the Bible. She prayed. She learned all she could. And she began to form in her mind a beautiful dream: Someday she

would marry a Latter-day Saint. Someday she would go to the temple. And someday she would give her children the precious gift she lacked: membership in the Lord's Church.

## **Miracle by Miracle**

By the time Annapurna graduated from college at age 20, her parents had begun planning a traditional arranged marriage for their beloved daughter. But Annapurna never considered her dreams to be unattainable because she felt that they were not hers alone. "I had big dreams," she says, "but actually God had His own plans for me."

When Annapurna was 21, those divine plans started to become reality—miracle by miracle. First, she met Santosh Murala, a faithful Latter-day Saint visiting his family in Hyderabad. A medical student, Santosh was doing a surgical residency in Chandigarh, two days away by train. When







they met, Annapurna and Santosh talked for half an hour. After that brief conversation, Santosh called his friend Neil Twitchell, who was then serving as India Bangalore Mission president, and confided, “She’s gold!” Santosh felt quite clearly that this was the woman he had been looking for. Annapurna felt that Santosh—the first Latter-day Saint young man she had ever met—was the man she had been praying to find.

The two exchanged a few letters, confirming their feelings. Several months later they married. Understandably, Annapurna’s family was upset at first, as was Santosh’s. But Annapurna was legally old enough to marry a man of her choosing.

Annapurna viewed this situation through the eyes of faith. “If I had married to please my parents and other people,” she says, “then my children might never have known about

the Church and the whole responsibility for that would have been on my head. This one step has changed life for me and my posterity. For this life my parents may be upset with me, but for eternity they will be happy and proud of me.” In fact, Annapurna’s parents are already more accepting of her marriage. They like Santosh and even get together socially with Santosh’s parents.

#### “God Takes Care of You”

The next part of Annapurna’s dream came true when at last she was baptized. There was no branch in Chandigarh, so the Muralas made the five-hour journey to New Delhi for the baptism. Ironically, now that Annapurna was free to go to church, the nearest branch was far away. “Before I was baptized, the church was very near my house, just on the corner at the end of the road, and I didn’t



**Top: Annapurna, Neil, and Santosh. A second son, Keith Ammon, was born in July 2002.**

**Annapurna dreams of the day her sons and others of their generation will serve missions, go to the temple, and become Church leaders in India.**

have the opportunity to go,” she says. “Now the church was five hours away, so we could go only once a month.” Then Annapurna became pregnant, and the five-hour trip was too taxing for her.



But then came another miracle, in the form of two Latter-day Saint families. “God takes care of you,” explains Santosh. A British couple, Brother and Sister Beer, came to Chandigarh, where Brother Beer worked in highway construction. Sister Beer taught institute classes to the Muralas, and the Beers held family home evening with the Muralas every week. A Korean family, the Moons, also moved to Chandigarh, where Brother Moon worked for a construction company. Every Sunday for two years, this little group of Latter-day Saints met at the Moons’ home for sacrament meeting. Shortly after Santosh finished his residency in Chandigarh, the Beers and the Moons moved away too.

In New Delhi, where Santosh is receiving specialized

***Annapurna’s cherished dream was finally fulfilled when she and Santosh and Neil were sealed in the Hong Kong China Temple in June 2001.***



training in heart surgery, there are two branches of the Church. Now Annapurna’s knowledge about the Church is catching up with her knowledge of the gospel. She has learned how to sing hymns and conduct meetings.

### **Dreams for the Next Generation**

On 19 June 2001—Annapurna’s 24th birthday—her girlhood dream of temple marriage came true. The Muralas traveled to the Hong Kong China Temple when their first baby, Neil, was not quite two. During the five full days they spent serving in the temple, the most sacred and wonderful moment came when they were sealed to each other and to their son.

Today the Muralas’ lives are full to overflowing. Annapurna serves as Primary president and Santosh as president of the New Delhi First Branch. Santosh also spends about 100 hours a week at the hospital, working 18- and 36-hour shifts. In order to have Sundays free for Church responsibilities, he works on holidays. So Annapurna spends most of her time caring for their two young children and supporting her husband in his heavy responsibilities.

And she continues to dream. She dreams of sharing the gospel with her parents. She dreams of the day when her own and others’ children—the first generation of children in India to have Primary, seminary, and Young Men and Young Women—will be strong leaders of the Church. She dreams of the time when her children will serve missions. She dreams of the time when they too will go to the

temple. And she even dares to dream that that temple might be in India. ■

*Rochelle Welty and her husband, Roy, served in the India Bangalore Mission. Jan Pinborough is a member of the East Mill Creek Fourth Ward, Salt Lake East Mill Creek Stake.*



*We thought we had tried everything to get our teens to come to family prayer and scripture study. What would happen if we let them decide for themselves?*

**BY DENISE FITZPATRICK**

**I**t's time for scripture study," I called from the bottom of the stairs. No response. "Come on, children. I know it's early, but we agreed to this."

I felt a familiar frustration and irritation begin to grow as I listened to their excuses.

"I *have* to take a shower," one said as she ran down the stairs.

"But I'm too tired to get up," came a sleepy voice from a bedroom.

"Well, I'm ready, but you'd better make it short," said one as he came down the stairs, a scowl on his face.

By the time we were all assembled, my husband had to leave and the rest of us were wearing frowns like my son's. We struggled through our reading together and managed to mutter a prayer.

"What a flop!" I thought as we finished. Why did we continue to put ourselves through this? Surely no

good could come while such a bad feeling prevailed at a time when we wanted the Holy Ghost to be present. It seemed so futile.

My husband and I felt we had done just about everything we could to establish the habit of daily scripture study and prayer for our family. We had urged, prodded, and encouraged. Our patience was diminishing with each word we spoke.

When our children were younger, we rarely had a problem with cooperation. They had looked forward to scripture study and prayer and even helped keep us from missing. But for the past two years, everything seemed to have gone amiss.

Recently we had moved so my husband could return to college. Consequently, we had a smaller income, less time, and less security—less of everything. We struggled to work out our new, ever-changing schedules. But no matter how hard we tried, what had always worked before wasn't working now. I reasoned that our lives had changed and that our children were older and had more independence. But the bottom line was that our family was failing miserably at having the kind of family prayers and scripture study that we desired.

That evening as we tried to gather for family prayer, we repeated the morning's fiasco. We seemed to be caught in a vicious cycle of either fighting with our children or throwing up our hands and saying "forget it."

Then a solution came to my mind as I was reading in the Doctrine and Covenants. It was one of those times when a passage of scripture seems to jump out:

"For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

"Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

"For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward" (D&C 58:26–28).

The words of the scripture echoed over and over in my mind. I could barely think of anything else. In our eagerness to teach our children the things of God, my husband and I were guilty of demanding, and at times forcing our children to come to family prayer and scripture study. Painfully I realized that forcing is Satan's way, not the Lord's. All five of our children had been baptized and were now accountable for their actions. It was time our children began acting for themselves, and that meant we had to let them choose whether or not to participate.

That night my husband and I called a family council and explained to the children that we had been wrong to force them to come to these family occasions. We told them it was important that they begin making their own decisions now. We felt they understood the importance of scripture study and family prayer, but we wanted them to come to these family times

because *they* wanted to partake of the Spirit. We decided each person in our family would be free to choose for himself or herself to come to family prayer and scripture study. As their parents we would provide the opportunity, but the choice of attending would be theirs.

After the children left, I sat in disbelief. What had we done? For a moment I was panic-stricken. But deep inside I knew it was the right decision for our family. Our children had to begin making their own spiritual decisions, and we decided we would rather have them stumble while they were still at home where we could set the

**A** solution came to my mind as I was reading in the Doctrine and Covenants: "*Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will*" (D&C 58:27). I realized it was time for us to let our children choose for themselves.

example than when they were on their own. We had to have faith that they would feel the spirit of these activities.

Amazingly, the very next time all five participated without any argument or hesitation. A few nights later they were all going to bed when one said, "Wait, we haven't had family prayer yet." Relief! We were finally back to the way it used to be.

We were grateful that none of our children chose to miss family prayer and scripture study. In fact, they were more eagerly involved than ever before. The arguing, contention, and bad spirit that once prevailed were gone. Occasionally we had someone in a bad mood because that individual was struggling to make the right decision. We reminded him or her that being there was not a requirement, but that those who chose to come were expected to contribute to a good spirit. When one of our children could not participate in family scripture study because of a legitimate conflict, my husband and I took time to have scripture study and prayer with that individual.

We learned the importance of allowing our children to make their own decisions concerning their spiritual progression. We learned it was important to

let go of them spiritually just as we had to let go of them physically for them to grow and mature.

By encouraging our children to exercise their agency, we were able to draw more fully upon the strength that regular family prayer and scripture study provide. ■

*Denise Fitzpatrick is a member of the Buffalo Ridge Ward, Cheyenne Wyoming Stake.*

## LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Most *Ensign* articles can be used for family home evening discussions. The following questions are for that purpose or for personal reflection.

1. In what ways can I help my children grow spiritually by encouraging them to use their agency in righteous ways?
2. How has Heavenly Father shown love and helped me when I have made wrong decisions? What can I learn from this that will help me strengthen my children?



# The Impact of Couple Missionaries



*Missionaries John and Patricia Waring have found joy in working with people such as the Okafo family of the Nsukka Branch, Nigeria Enugu Mission.*

*Church leaders have asked for more senior missionaries, citing the difference they can make.*

**Sharing Our Dream of a Lifetime**

A few decades ago, we were able to fellowship and help activate a wonderful couple in our stake, George and Joanne Watters. We loved doing member missionary work in this way but always felt there was more we could do.

We had dreamed about serving a mission together after retirement. We saw our bishop, turned in our missionary papers, and started packing.

We were quite excited when we received our call to the Nigeria Enugu Mission. We chuckled as Sister Watters told us, "We're so excited for you—but we're glad it's not us!"

Soon we learned that life in Nigeria was a big adjustment. We saw much of poverty and sickness. But we fell in love with the smiling people, who instantly made us feel welcome. We saw beauty and dignity in their lives in spite of their trying circumstances. And we were surprised to learn how happily and comfortably we could live with so much less than what we were accustomed to back home.

We rarely had to find people to teach, as people would simply come to us, and we felt great joy in sharing the gospel and seeing people grow. We helped and encouraged our new branch president, a student who had just turned 22. We assisted many other recent converts, and as the faith and joy of the people increased, so did our own.



**Sister Joanne Watters works in the mission office. This elder and his twin brother are both missionaries.**

Correspondence with our grown children—whom we had thought could not get along without us—showed that they too were thriving. We also regularly corresponded with Brother and Sister Watters, sharing with them the marvelous experiences we were having.

Several months before our mission was complete, Brother and Sister Watters wrote to tell us that they too had accepted a call to serve as missionaries—in Enugu,

Nigeria! We served alongside these friends for four months before we completed our mission.

With their love of the gospel, enthusiasm, and skills, Brother and Sister Watters brought great strength to the Church in Enugu. The couple who once told us they were glad not to be in our shoes loved the Nigerians so much that, a year after their mission was complete, they returned to Enugu to run a school that teaches computer skills to young people preparing for employment.

During our 18-month mission, we found a new home away from home, we adopted a new people, we made eternal friends. After being home for a few years, we find ourselves yearning to go again.

*John and Patricia Waring, Golden Hills Ward, Bakersfield California East Stake*

**Helping Others Succeed**

While serving as Church-service missionaries in LDS Family Services Substance Abuse Recovery Program, we learned much as we worked with individuals struggling with drug and alcohol addiction.

Tim (name has been changed) was one such individual. Tim's family had lived in our ward when our children were growing up, and he was a friend of one of our sons. We remembered him as a good-looking boy with a contagious smile, a boy raised in a righteous family.

We were shocked when Tim showed up in one of our recovery groups—a group we conducted for prison inmates! Tim explained to the group that as a teenager he had experimented with drugs. He eventually became seriously





PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF GRANT AND CAROLE JEWKES

**Church-service missionaries and others in the Family Services Substance Abuse Recovery program in Pleasant Grove, Utah. Grant and Carole Jewkes are the second couple from the right in the back row.**

addicted and lived on the streets, stealing from and manipulating others in order to support his habit. After this behavior led to his imprisonment, Tim became humble and began to remember the truths his parents had taught him.

Through the weeks and then months, Tim faithfully attended our group. We and several other missionary couples loved and supported him as he participated in the recovery program with all his heart. We listened as he humbly pleaded with the Lord to forgive him and to change him into a new man through the power of the Atonement. Gradually, Tim's whole countenance changed. He even became a mentor for many confused and discouraged offenders who were struggling.

After his release from prison, Tim continued to grow. Eventually, he received a temple recommend and married in the temple. He has been drug free for six years. He also works as a facilitator in the Substance Abuse Recovery Program in his hometown, where he now assists senior missionaries in helping others.

It was our great privilege to be able to serve Tim and others like him during our mission. We feel so grateful that the Savior prepared and allowed us to help accomplish His will in such a marvelous way.

*Grant and Carole Jewkes, Battle Creek Second Ward, Pleasant Grove Utah East Stake*

### **Building Bridges of Friendship**

After leaving our home in Ontario, Canada, and arriving to proselyte in the California Oakland Mission several years ago, we were saddened to learn that although African-Americans make up nearly half the population of Oakland, few had ever visited the Oakland temple visitors' center and Family History Center. We fervently prayed that a way might be prepared in which we could change this situation.

One night at a Christmas crèche display in a stake center, we were introduced to a local journalist named Paul Cobb. He was an African-American who happened to be the religion editor for the *Oakland Tribune*.

When Mr. Cobb mentioned that he'd recently been in Ontario researching the destination of slaves who escaped to Canada on the underground railroad before the Civil War, we told him that Malcolm's ancestors in Ontario had assisted many escaped slaves. Visibly touched, Mr. Cobb interviewed Malcolm, and soon an article appeared in the *Oakland Tribune* titled "Mormon Leader Traces Roots to Underground Railroad."

Over the next two years, more than 40 positive stories about the Church ran in the paper.

Misperceptions in the African-American community about Latter-day Saints began to change. After reading



**YOUR LIFE IS YOUR PREPARATION**



*“Your life is your preparation. You have valuable experience. You have raised a family and served in the Church. Just go and be yourselves. The Lord has promised that angels will go before you” (see D&C 103:19–20).*

**Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Couple Missionaries: A Time to Serve,” Ensign, May 2001, 25.**

Mr. Cobb’s articles, one community member called and asked if we would host in our stake center a lecture by a renowned historian on African-American genealogy. We were delighted. Some 350 attended the lecture and toured the Family History Center. A video of the lecture ran on television and on the Internet.

A few months later, we sponsored at the same stake center a lecture by two Church members, Marie Taylor and African-American author Darius Gray. They spoke of how the Lord guided them in the work that led to the Church’s production of the Freedman’s Bank Records on CD-ROM, a user-friendly database of 480,000 names of early

African-Americans. This time, some 600 people, mostly African-Americans, attended the event and signed up for classes at the Family History Center.

Special events such as these have continued, including a lecture by George Haley, U.S. ambassador to Gambia and a brother of *Roots* author Alex Haley. Local African-American leaders have expressed how happy they are about this relationship with the Church.

As we look back at our mission, we continue to be amazed at how the Lord prepares each of us throughout our lives to serve in the ways He needs us. ■

*Malcolm and Helen Warner, Oak Forest Second Ward, Layton Utah North Stake*



**Top left: Malcolm Warner and Rev. J. Alfred Smith.**



**Center: Darius Gray and Betty Stevenson.**



**Lower left: Ambassador George Haley and his wife, Doris. Below right: Samples of Paul Cobb columns, including one with Sister Warner’s picture.**



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MALCOLM AND HELEN WARNER

# STAND

## and Be Judged for What We Really Are



***The life of Jesus Christ stands as the sure standard by which we can know who we really are and measure the quality of our lives.***

**BY ELDER ROBERT C. OAKS**  
Of the Seventy

I have spent 35 years of my life in military service. During a discussion with a Christian friend from the military, he made this figurative comment: “One day we will all hang our coats in the corner and stand and be judged by the Lord for what we really are.”

What we seem to be, or what we would like others to think we are, is often reflected by the clothing we wear, such as coats with their various emblems. This is especially true in the military, where one’s coat bears the insignia of rank, longevity, and special skills, plus medals and awards for various deeds of heroism and service. This is also true in many other segments of society. Athletes and fans are proud to wear their team’s jacket. Club members wear various logos on their jackets.

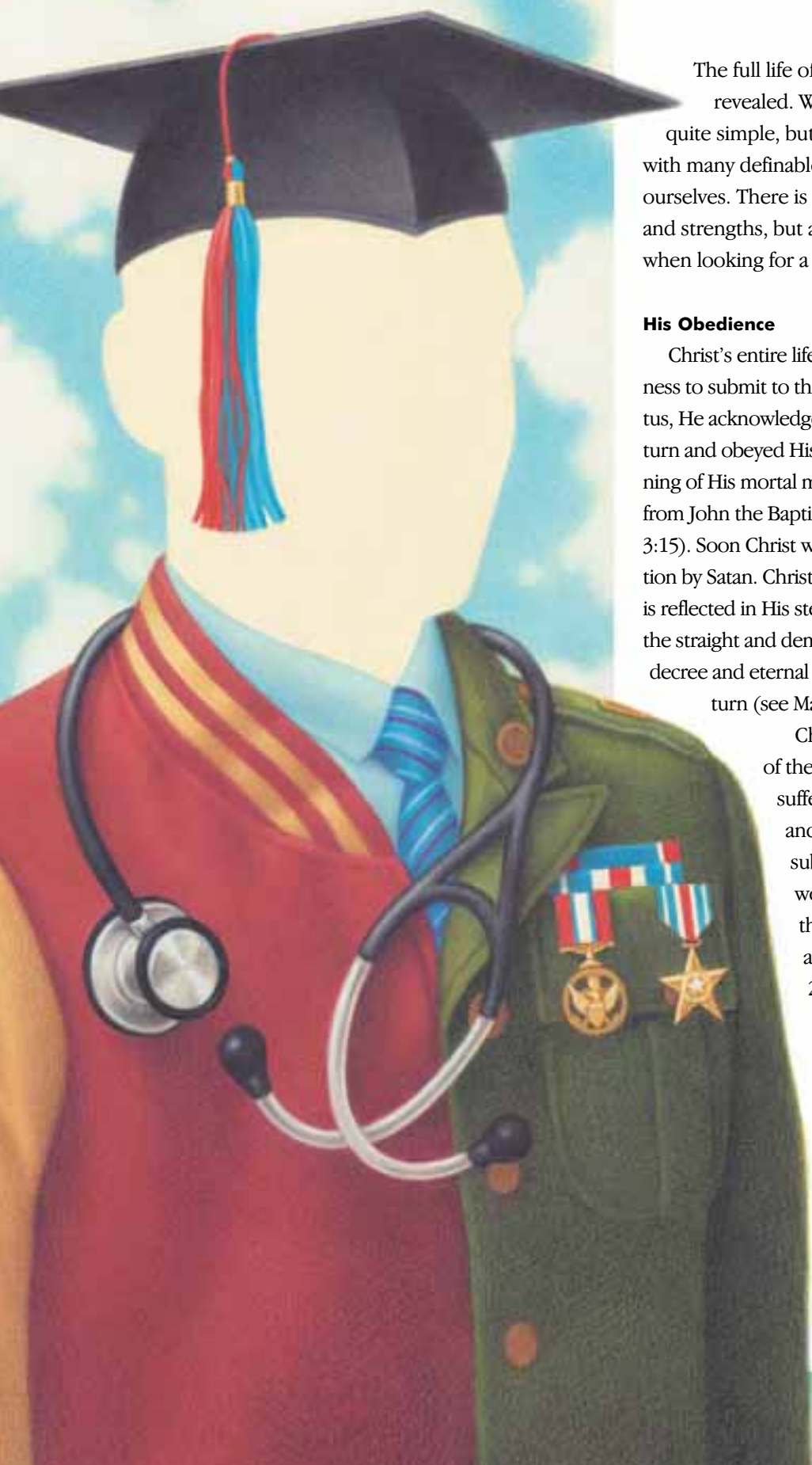
But who is the real person underneath these coats? The real person is the one who will stand before the all-knowing Lord on Judgment Day. The Lord will see quickly into our hearts and discern who we really are.

As we look forward to judgment, we must define and ponder what is it about ourselves that is going to be measured. What is the character “coinage” of the celestial realm? I have concluded that it is actually fairly easy to determine and describe what will have value in the celestial kingdom. The life of

Jesus Christ stands as the sure standard by which we can know who we really are and measure the quality of our lives.

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) taught: “The highest of all ideals are the teachings and particularly the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and that man is most truly great who is most Christlike. What you sincerely in your heart think of Christ will determine what you are, will largely determine what your acts will be. . . . By choosing him as our ideal, we create within ourselves a desire to be like him, to have fellowship with him” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, 93, 98). The scriptures also give us examples of faithful Saints besides Christ that can broaden the picture of what our Father in Heaven expects us to really be. The life and character of Christ, however, with all of its glorious dimensions, regally stands as the fundamental standard. So, the two key questions to consider are: “Do I know my true character?” and “How does the real me measure up to Christ?”

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEVE KROPP



The full life of Jesus Christ is complex and not totally revealed. What we do know of His character is quite simple, but grand and glorious, and provides us with many definable traits by which we should measure ourselves. There is not space here to present all His virtues and strengths, but a few can be useful and instructive when looking for a character yardstick.

### **His Obedience**

Christ's entire life was characterized by his total willingness to submit to the will of His Father. Despite His godly status, He acknowledged His Father with deference at every turn and obeyed His divine will and direction. At the beginning of His mortal ministry, He obediently sought baptism from John the Baptist "to fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Soon Christ was subjected to intense personal temptation by Satan. Christ's unwavering commitment to His Father is reflected in His steadfast refusal to stray a single step from the straight and demanding course laid before Him by divine decree and eternal law. Satan's will was rejected at every turn (see Matthew 4:3–11).

Christ's ultimate submission to the will of the Father was as He drank the bitter cup of suffering in Gethsemane, at His scourging, and in His Crucifixion on Golgotha. His submissive attitude is reflected in His words, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). His example of unhesitating, unswerving obedience sets a very high bar, but when we accept His admonition to "be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect" (3 Nephi 12:48) as a key element of the plan of eternal progression, we begin to understand what the Lord expects us to be. As we seek to determine what kind of Saints we really are, we must honestly grade ourselves on our willingness to obey God.

### His Discipline

Another trait in Christ's life that we are to emulate is the absolute discipline with which He conducted His life in accordance with the laws and standards of the gospel. He conformed His life to all of the precepts of the Old Testament prophets, the fulness of the New Testament gospel, and the latter-day restored gospel. His every act ties all the ages of Christianity together into a complete mosaic, letting us see the full beauty of mortal and eternal perfection. The most careful examination of His life reveals no act for which an apology or rationalization is required. He was, and is, perfect in disciplining His life. For example, when He admonishes us to "let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly" (D&C 121:45), we can be confident that He has lived this most difficult standard. And since we know He gives no commandment save He prepares a way for us to obey (see 1 Nephi 3:7), we can expect that virtuous thoughts will be one of the Christ-founded standards on our Day of Judgment.

### His Love

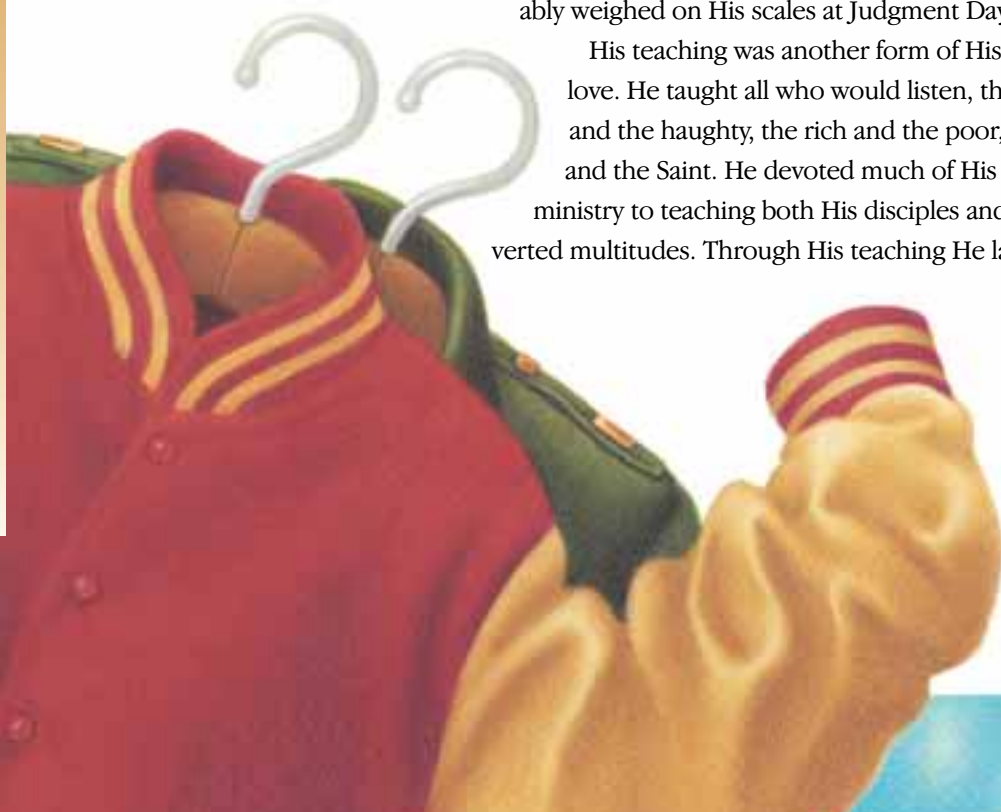
The single word that is most often used to describe Christ and His life is *love*. In fact, the Apostle John wrote of

**O**n our Day of Judgment before the Lord Jesus Christ, His careful, penetrating gaze will not be deflected by any "coats" we have donned over the course of our lives.

the Son that "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Everything about the life of Christ radiates love in the broadest and warmest sense of the word. His life defines the meaning of charity and selflessness. Through His service and teaching, Jesus Christ has shown us that our lives are to be measured by our ability to lose ourselves in productive concern for others. In all of recorded scripture, there is no instance of Christ expending any energy or effort for selfish reasons. He asks only that we acknowledge His role as our Lord and Savior, that we might enjoy the fruits of repentance and forgiveness.

One of those fruits is His healing. It is one of the most obvious messages of His ministries as recorded in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon. He healed all who came or were brought to Him (see Luke 4:40; 6:19; 3 Nephi 17:9; 26:15). That the Savior spent so much time healing should be a powerful reminder for us to care for the afflicted. He attended to the needs of all people, including those who were physically disabled and those who were emotionally and spiritually crippled. The blind, the lame, the possessed, the proud, the adulterous, and even the dead were recipients of His healing love. He attended to their immediate and long-term needs. Such a love should be a high priority for those who desire to be favorably weighed on His scales at Judgment Day.

His teaching was another form of His healing love. He taught all who would listen, the humble and the haughty, the rich and the poor, the sinner and the Saint. He devoted much of His three-year ministry to teaching both His disciples and His unconverted multitudes. Through His teaching He laid the



foundation for the spreading of His doctrines throughout the world. He freely gave to all the core teachings of the plan of salvation, such as the Atonement, faith, repentance, and forgiveness. His teachings healed spiritual wounds and are an exemplary legacy of His love for all.

### **His Forgiving Heart**

*Forgiveness* can be a warm, pleasant word as we look forward with hope for heavenly mercy and generosity at our Judgment Day. But forgiveness also has some stern realities associated with it. For example:

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. . . .

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

“But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:12, 14–15).

“Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven” (Luke 6:37).

“Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin” (D&C 64:9).

The Lord expects us to reach far beyond the natural man, even to godly heights in forgiving others. He expects us to be as forgiving with others as we would have Him be with us. This may initially seem fair, even generous, but as we focus on the challenges of forgiving others we realize that this may not be so simple or easy. It can be quite difficult to be forgiving all the time, even a majority of the time. Perhaps the ultimate example of Christ forgiving others is when He said as He hung on the cross, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). With this sublime model in mind, such commonly heard words as “I will never forgive him for that” or “I’ll certainly get even with her” should cause the spiritually sensitive soul to shudder.

However, rather than despair at the difficulty of always being forgiving, let us ponder the beauty of the Lord’s promises. With the Lord’s help we are the masters of our destiny. We can draw from the infinite reserves of the Lord’s forgiveness in direct proportion to the forgiveness

we extend to others. Because of His Atonement He can make such a promise, but its blessings are conditioned upon our faith in Him, repentance, and obedience. We have been given a clear view of the place of forgiveness in His character by His example and teachings. No personal growth toward a satisfying day of Final Judgment can be achieved without attention to the challenges of being truly forgiving.

### **The Judgment Bar**

Obedience, discipline, love, and forgiveness are just a few of the divine characteristics of our Lord Jesus Christ. Each reminds us of where we need to look for the standards by which we will be measured as we prepare for the Lord’s judgment bar, the place where we will be judged for who we really are. As we reflect upon these traits, we will naturally be led to other traits of His character that can guide us through our mortal probation.

The admonition to be perfect will be daunting unless we realize that our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, love us immeasurably and will help us. They have designed a plan whereby we can return to Their presence if we will strive to obey Their laws and follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

Whether we will realize our longed-for return to God’s presence hinges on the outcome of our Day of Judgment before the Lord Jesus Christ. His careful, penetrating gaze will not be deflected by any “coats” we have donned over the course of our lives. Such coverings will have long since been cast aside. We will indeed stand and be judged for what we really are.

This life is our opportunity to sculpt a celestial soul sufficient to stand the scrutiny of the Son. I am certain He will want to be able to pronounce the words “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21). As we chisel our character day to day, we will find greater happiness if we will cast aside the distracting tapestries and garments we tend to collect on earth and work on the inner stone of our real selves. We have been given both a perfect pattern and the perfect tools to sculpt an eternal masterpiece. May we use them as we look to Christ and dedicate our lives to Him. ■

## *Does My Life Have a Purpose?*

By Michael Renker

**I** had often asked myself whether my life had a purpose, but now this question was very serious to me. Although I was only 22, my legs had suddenly become extremely weak. “Perhaps they have just grown tired from dancing in the local discos,” I thought.

“Maybe they have gone on strike.”

I went to a doctor, who thought I had a muscle disease and immediately sent me to a clinic. Thus began a period of going from clinic to clinic throughout my native Germany. I underwent many tests, but none of them showed any problem. Still I was in severe pain and had no strength. It was almost unbearable. Because the tests were all negative, everyone thought I must be pretending. I felt alone and could find no purpose in life, although I longed for one.

**M**y new friend gave me a *Book of Mormon*, and I began reading it. Soon I could not stop thinking about the Church.



About this time I was sent to a clinic in Koblenz, Germany. When I arrived I met a young woman about my age who seemed different from the other patients. She seemed to have a positive attitude about her life, even though she was seriously ill. I saw her in the hall one Sunday. She was wearing a Sunday dress, and I asked her why she was so dressed up. She answered, "I was at church."

I had not had any interest in religion for a long time. Although I had been raised in a Protestant faith, I felt religion was a lot of empty talk. I knew there was a God, but I didn't think much of organized religion here on earth.

"Church?" I said, swallowing hard. Then I asked her which church she belonged to.

"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," she answered. I blanched. "What was that? A strange sect?" I wondered. I asked her many questions about her church. Even though she had been through a great deal, she did not doubt. She prayed to and trusted in her Heavenly Father. That fascinated and frightened me at the same time.

My new friend gave me a Book of Mormon, and I began reading it. The missionaries in Koblenz soon taught me the first discussion. Then because of an illness I contracted, I was transferred to a different clinic. My friend visited me often. I had the Book of Mormon with me, and I continued to read. I had learned a great deal about

life, and for the first time I had found a true friend.

On a leave from the clinic, I visited my friend and her family in Solingen. They were the dearest people I had ever met, and on Sunday I attended church with them. When I returned to the clinic, I could not stop thinking about the Church. I had known there was something true about the Book of Mormon, but now everything became much clearer. One thought was on my mind: "Should I join the Church?"

When I was finally released from the clinic, I returned to my home in Fulda. Then I received another invitation to visit my new friends in Solingen and was welcomed even more heartily than before. I learned more about the gospel and decided to be baptized. When I returned home I found the missionaries in my area, and they taught me the remaining discussions in Fulda. I had finally found my purpose in life, and I was baptized.

I thank my Heavenly Father with all my heart for helping me find His gospel and Church. My legs are back to normal now. The doctors never found out what caused the pain, but if I had not become sick, I would still be searching for purpose in my life. What a loving Father! He doesn't give up on anyone.

I used to wonder what I was supposed to learn from my illness. Now I know. ■

*Michael Renker is a member of the Cedar Pass Sixth Ward, Eagle Mountain Utah Stake.*

## *With Fasting and Prayer*

By Ruth Rodríguez Sotelo

When my son Elard Manuel was baptized in 1990, he had a job in a grocery store where working Sundays and holidays was mandatory. The economic situation in Peru is quite difficult. There are few jobs, and many people are out of work. It seemed virtually impossible for my son to change his employment.

"I'm going to pay my tithing," he said. "I have faith in the Lord, and somehow I'm going to get a job with Sundays off."

When my son married a young woman who belonged to another religion, our family hoped that someday she would become a Latter-day Saint. To my surprise, as I was getting ready for church one Sunday, she said to me, "I will go to your church with you."

The missionaries started teaching her the discussions, and in 1997 she was baptized. On 10 September 1998 my son and his wife, Katya, were sealed in the temple for time and all eternity, and on 12 October 1998 their beautiful baby boy was born.

During these years my son continued to try to find a job that wouldn't require him to work on Sunday. Our whole family prayed and fasted and asked the Lord to help him find a new job so that he could hold a Church calling.

Finally my son decided to work for one more month and then quit his job—whether he had a new one or not. We were quite worried because people everywhere were losing their jobs. But my son said, “I have faith in the Lord, and I know He is going to help me find a job with Sundays off.”

The grocery store he worked for has a huge warehouse where all the merchandise is brought before being distributed to the stores. It is quite far away, but the employees there have Sundays off. To our joy and surprise, my son was able to transfer to that warehouse. Our Heavenly Father had heard our prayers. And my son did receive a Church calling—as a counselor in the bishopric.

When we asked the Lord with faithful hearts and with fasting and prayer, He answered us with blessings. ■

*Ruth Rodríguez Sotelo is a member of the Zamácola Ward, Arequipa Perú Zamácola Stake.*

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## Lynette's Testimony

By Leah Poole Wright

It was a beautiful day for a walk in California's San Bernardino Mountains. Our seven children found walking sticks, and my husband, Mark, took the lead. We stopped to marvel at a spider meticulously spinning its web. We looked at the tall pine trees, stretching their

branches to heaven. It seemed the birds were singing just for us.

At last we reached the perfect spot for a testimony meeting. We all sat on some old tree stumps forming a circle. Mark started by expressing his love for me and our children and by bearing his testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel and the blessings of our temple marriage.

After I bore my testimony, each of the children, starting with the oldest, expressed love for us and for each other.

Finally it was time to hear from four-year-old Lynette, who had sat patiently for almost an hour with her thumb in her mouth. I asked, “Lynette, what are you thankful for?”

She looked up at me with her clear blue eyes and confidently answered, “I'm thankful for Jesus, because He loves me.”

We were all taken aback. For an hour we had expressed our love and appreciation for all we had, but we had failed to acknowledge that it is through the love and sacrifice of our Savior that we receive our blessings. Little Lynette, with the directness and innocence of a child, had cut through to the core of our beliefs.

Later I thought of the Savior gathering the little children about Him and saying, “Behold your little ones” (3 Nephi 17:23). How well our little one taught us that day! ■

*Leah Poole Wright is a member of the Hyrum 11th Ward, Hyrum Utah Stake.*

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## Linked by Suffering

By Adam C. Olson

For many years, my mother has courageously struggled with health problems, the most difficult of which are recurring migraine headaches. While her pain has occasioned beautiful priesthood blessings and has increased our family unity, it has also required much faith, patience, and long-suffering while we have waited for the promised healing.

My perspective on my mother's health struggles broadened after I returned from serving a mission to Panama. At that time my 17-year-old brother was also battling intense migraine headaches that left him debilitated.

Late one night I heard him crying out in pain. I approached his darkened doorway, only to pull back as I heard my mother's soft voice from within his room. She spoke to him reassuringly, trying to soothe his cries of fear and pain. Standing outside the door, I heard his voice tense with a suffering incomprehensible to me. “Mom,” he asked, “am I going to die?”

I slowly backed away, his question tearing at my heart. But then I heard my mother, who knew exactly what he was experiencing, crying with him and telling him he would be all right.

That moment touched me, but its greater significance struck me some



years later when I was preparing a lesson about the Atonement. Reflecting on the Savior's vicarious suffering, I recalled my mother's compassionate ministrations. My mother was better able to comfort my brother because she had felt what he was feeling; she understood his suffering. Linked to him by the pain they both had felt, she stayed ever near as he passed through his trial.

Likewise, our beloved Savior has descended below all things to an absolute understanding of our trials (see D&C 122:8). Not only has He suffered for our sins, but He also took upon Himself "the pains and the

sicknesses of his people" (Alma 7:11). Through His perfect Atonement, He knows every sickness, every affliction, and every trial we pass through. And to what end? "That his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:12).

Observing my mother and learning of the Atonement taught me a valuable principle: sorrow and pain can teach us to nurture

others in compassion and love. My mother's example of compassion that night inspired in me a greater appreciation for the suffering our Savior went through. And in my own trials, I feel the unfailing presence of His Spirit comforting me "according to [my] infirmities"—just as my mother comforted my brother. ■

*Adam C. Olson is a member of the Bountiful 45th Ward, Bountiful Utah East Stake.*

**S** *tanding outside the door, I heard my brother's voice tense with a suffering incomprehensible to me. "Mom," he asked, "am I going to die?"*



## Picture This

I love keeping a journal and creating interesting photo albums for our family, including each of our children. Combining my two interests into a hobby called photo journaling allows me to record my thoughts *and* show what I'm writing about at the same time. Following are some of my favorite photo journaling ideas:

### Family Albums

*Your home's interior and exterior.* I have pictures and journal thoughts for every home my husband and I have lived in. I've also recorded a few memories about the rooms in the home where I grew up. It's also helpful to draw a simple house plan so that years later your posterity will know how the home's layout was when you lived there.

*Special heirlooms.* I've written a brief history of each item shown in the photos, listing the original owner and any other interesting information.

*Vehicles.* Any special memories about the vehicles we have owned are written next to the picture, and I have also recorded how much each cost—a bit

of information that becomes more interesting over the years.

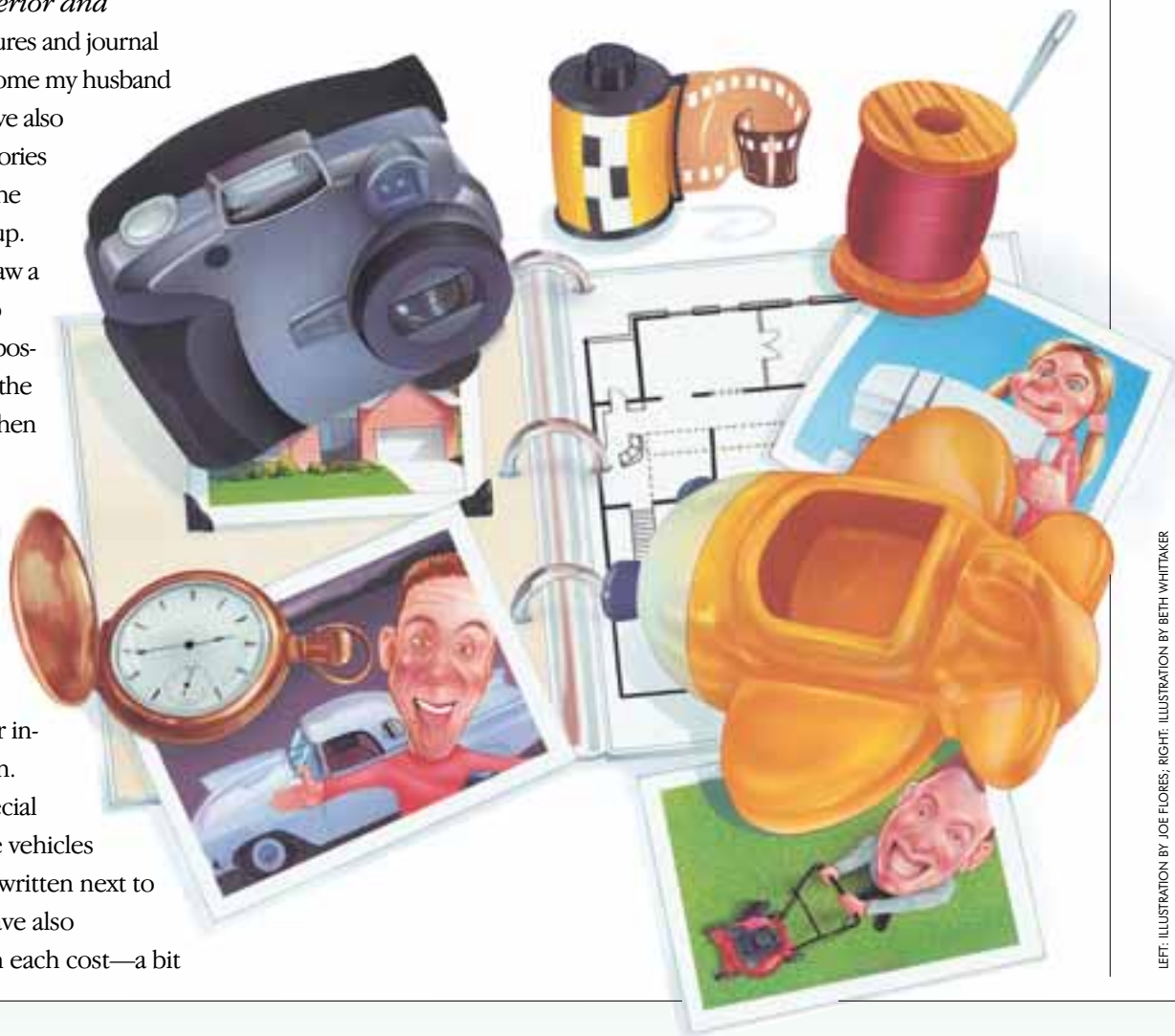
### Children's Albums

*Chores and other jobs.* Take unposed pictures showing your children dusting, vacuuming, and doing other household tasks. As our children have earned money through paper routes, mowing lawns, and other jobs, I've remembered to take the camera and record those events too.

*Lessons.* When my daughter took sewing lessons one year, I snapped

photos of her and her instructor as they sewed together and later when my daughter modeled the finished products. I've also taken pictures of my son during his art and band lessons.

*Favorite toys and pets.* These photos and recorded memories are some of the most treasured pages in my children's photo albums. Since it's impossible to store every favorite toy over the years, this is a great way to preserve the memories. And long after beloved pets have passed away, we still enjoy seeing them in our album pages.



## INVITING EXTENDED FAMILY

*Family home evenings.* We once invited a couple who had studied abroad at the BYU Jerusalem Center to tell us about their experience. They wore costumes native to the area, and we have pictures of them sharing family night with us. Regular family home evening activities are also good to record, with nonposed pictures showing the family singing, listening to a lesson, or playing games.

Members of our family, especially the children, love to look through our albums. It not only boosts our children's self-confidence to see that the events in their lives are important enough to put in a special book, but it also helps us record their personal histories, starting with their early years.

*Marlene Cameron Thomas, Pellissippi Ward, Knoxville Tennessee Stake*

## Planning to Play

Since our family members had full-time jobs or activities Monday through Friday, we spent Saturday doing yard work and household tasks. That meant we seldom had a work-free day when we could enjoy recreational activities. To avoid the Saturday "chore crunch," we held a family council to discuss ways to more efficiently use our time during the week.

During our discussion we read, "Wherefore, if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today" (D&C 64:25). Though the word *today* here refers to the time between now and

More than 50 years ago, my grandparents began holding family home evening with their 12 children and their families. My grandparents gathered everyone together once a month for a combined family home evening, with each child taking a turn to be in charge.

This tradition continues today as an even larger extended family meets monthly. At times, well over 100 family

members have gathered in Grandmother's large living room to have family prayer, hear faith-promoting stories, share family news and humor, perform musical numbers, and celebrate holidays. Other times, we have met at a local building to accommodate our growing extended family. The 12 siblings still take turns planning each monthly home evening. The person in charge contacts the other siblings, who



then contact family members living in their area.

Initially, Grandma and Grandpa did not know how their faithfulness would strengthen family ties for their posterity. Years later a spirit of togetherness and a sense of belonging still pervade at our extended family home evenings. I am thankful that half a century ago my grandparents realized the importance of family home evening and started a tradition that continues to teach us of the eternal importance of our family.

*Regina Williams Klitgaard, Rosewood Ward, Layton Utah Holmes Creek Stake*



the coming of the Savior (see v. 23), we found that this scripture had an everyday application for us.

We agreed that each of us wasted some time each day and that if we used our time more efficiently Monday through Friday, we could ordinarily do all the household chores and yard work throughout the week instead of leaving them undone until Saturday. To accomplish this goal, each family member committed to do chores during the week and to do them as they saw the need, without being assigned.

What a marvelous change our family experienced! Not only did the

chores get done by Friday evening, but we strengthened our family unity as we helped each other. Except for the occasional unforeseen need, we then enjoyed work-free Saturdays, participating in many recreational activities together or letting family members enjoy individual interests. Perhaps the greatest benefit of enjoying work-free Saturdays was that our desire to keep the Sabbath day holy increased. Having enjoyed our recreation on Saturday, we were content to do appropriate Sabbath activities on the Lord's day of rest.

*LaVerd and Flora Jobn, North Ogden Fifth Ward, North Ogden Utah Stake*

# Prepare for Temple Worship

**P**ayerfully select and read from this message the scriptures and teachings that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Share your experiences and testimony. Invite those you teach to do the same.

**D&C 109:13, 15:** At the Kirtland Temple dedication, the Prophet Joseph Smith petitioned “that all people who shall enter upon the threshold of the Lord’s house may . . . receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost, and be organized according to thy laws, and be prepared to obtain every needful thing.”

**President Gordon B. Hinckley:** “These unique and wonderful buildings, and the ordinances administered therein, represent the ultimate in our worship. These ordinances become the most profound expressions of our theology. I urge our people everywhere . . . to live worthy to hold a temple recommend, to secure one and regard it as a precious asset, and to make a greater effort to go to the house of the Lord and partake of the spirit and the blessings to be had therein” (“Of Missions, Temples, and Stewardship,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 53).

**President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:** “The ordinances and ceremonies of the temple are simple. They are beautiful. They are sacred. They are kept confidential lest they be given to those who are unprepared. Curiosity is not a preparation. Deep interest itself is not a preparation. Preparation for the ordinances includes preliminary steps: faith, repentance, baptism, confirmation, worthiness, a maturity and dignity worthy of one who comes invited as a guest into the house of the Lord” (“The Holy Temple,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1995, 32).

**Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:** “There are two concepts we especially need to keep in mind as we prepare

for the temple. The first is *covenant*. We need to remember that a covenant is a promise. A covenant made with God should be regarded not as restrictive but as protective. Covenants with Him protect us from danger. . . .

“The second concept to stress in our mental preparation is *Atonement*. The Atonement of Jesus Christ is the central act of all human history. It is the core of the plan of salvation. Without the infinite Atonement, all mankind would be irretrievably lost. Temple ordinances and covenants teach of the redeeming power of the Atonement” (“Prepare for Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2002, 21–22).

**Kathleen H. Hughes, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency:** “Because the temple is a house of peace, a house of revelation, a house of prayer, we should prepare ourselves to partake of the spirit and gifts that reside there for us as daughters of our Heavenly Father. Preparing to experience the blessings of the temple requires that we go humbly, prayerfully, and thoughtfully, that we willingly put aside the world and its worries. It requires that while in the temple we are attentive and we actively and thoughtfully listen and participate in ordinances we receive for ourselves and for others.”

- *What blessings have you received from temple worship?*
- *How can you partake of temple blessings if you live far from a temple?* ■



JOSEPH SMITH INSTRUCTS THE APOSTLES IN THE KIRTLAND TEMPLE. BY JOHN FALTER

## Burgos Philippines Stake

By Nenita Y. Ramirez

**F**or Saints in the Burgos Philippines Stake, planting seeds of the gospel is like planting rice—it has become part of their daily lives.

The towns of Burgos, San Pedro, Roxas, Aurora, Caliguan, and Tabuk are situated in an endless expanse of green approximately 260 miles (420 km) north of Manila, and farming is the center of economic activity. These areas make up the Burgos Philippines Stake, organized in May 2001 from a district that had quadrupled its membership in three years. Seven wards and eight branches now form the stake, and growth continues to be tremendous in this part of the Lord's vineyard.

Much of that growth stems from the early example of Burgos stake president Rogelio Sumaoang Martin. Brother Martin remembers when he and his family were the first and only members in Burgos. They had to attend church in the town of Roxas,

7 miles (12 km) away. Sometimes they did not have enough money for bus fare. Brother Martin promised the Lord that if He would provide him with just enough money to get him and his family to the Sunday meetings and leadership trainings, he would stay active.

So between harvests, Brother Martin caught birds to sell and gave manual services to other farms, from which he earned enough for the fare. There were also times when he borrowed a bicycle after leadership meetings that lasted until the last bus had left. This valiant brother sometimes pedaled the 12 kilometers home in the pitch black of night.

When missionaries started visiting him in Burgos, Brother Martin thought that if he brought his neighbors to church they could eventually have a meetinghouse of their own and his family need not go to faraway Roxas. He started referring his relatives



**For President Martin and his family, planting gospel seeds comes as naturally as farming.**

and friends to the missionaries with a sense of urgency. At the first meeting in the town's own little meetinghouse, 97 people were in attendance—only 30 of whom were members. The rest were interested in learning more about the gospel.

Brother Martin caught the vision. And so did others. As farmers, they understand the principle of thrusting in their sickle with all their might, thereby reaping what they sow. They take to heart the scripture that says, "The field is white already to harvest" (D&C 4:4) as they go about their daily tasks—weaving missionary work into the fabric of community life, as though planting and harvesting grain from their farmlands. One could look at the vast farmlands in which the Burgos Saints toil and expect an abundant harvest. One also sees a parallel in their work for the greatest harvest of all—the harvest of souls.

Also as farmers, they do not spend each day of the year on the farm. Their busiest months are during preparation of the soil for new planting. "We feel blessed that we have more time to do the Lord's work,"

says Remegio G. Cariaga, bishop of the Burgos First Ward, echoing sentiments of other Saints in the area.

"We may not have the luxuries that some urban employees enjoy, but we are not tied down to a clock," President Martin says. "After planting, we have time to do the Lord's work. That is our work."

Many afternoons are spent in meetinghouses or in a nipa hut where members share a harvest of boiled lagkitan (native sweet corn), crisp turnips, or a bowl of dried watermelon seeds while discussing how they can help even more in the growth of the Church.

The leaders encourage their congregation to help in bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of man by sharing the gospel plan (see Moses 1:39). And today the Saints in Burgos, Philippines, continue to share the gospel with those around them. Others may wonder where they get the courage and confidence to boldly share the message of the gospel. To these Saints it is simply because they are not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■



**Saints in Burgos gather together after a meeting. They are united in doing the Lord's work.**



**Sister missionaries teach from the scriptures. President Gordon B. Hinckley recently instructed leaders to help potential missionaries be worthy and prepared to teach by the Spirit.**

## Priesthood Leaders Worldwide Receive Training via Satellite

By Don L. Searle

Stake and ward priesthood leaders around the world received counsel from President Gordon B. Hinckley and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in a first-of-its-kind leadership training broadcast in January.

“We see this as an important opportunity to teach foundation doctrines and principles, and their application in local circumstances,” stated a letter signed by the First Presidency announcing the broadcast. “We anticipate that the broadcast will do much to strengthen the faith of the leaders worldwide as they labor to bring souls unto Christ and build the Kingdom of God on earth.”

The meeting was for priesthood leaders, including

stake presidents, bishops, and other priesthood officers. Translated into more than 50 languages, the broadcast originated at Church headquarters in Salt Lake City and reached some 97 percent of targeted Church leaders. Only a swath of land in western Africa was outside the satellite footprint. Leaders in that area received the full training meeting by videotape.

Speakers focused on topics basic to the salvation of individuals and to the progress of the Lord’s kingdom on earth, such as living the Lord’s standards, preparing to receive and live temple covenants, strengthening families, and advancing missionary work.

“Missionary work is the lifeblood of the Church,”

President Hinckley said in his remarks. “It is older than the Church itself.”

“Who should do full-time missionary work? Those who are worthy and are called,” he explained. “We simply cannot permit those who have not qualified themselves to go into the world to preach the glad tidings of the gospel.”

“Let me emphasize that we need missionaries,” President Hinckley explained, but they must be spiritually and physically capable of doing the work.

President Hinckley also said missionaries can do a better job if they learn to teach with spiritual conviction and not just through rote memorization. Let them learn to speak from their own convictions; let them ask the Lord each morning to loosen their tongues, and let them teach with His help, President Hinckley urged.

President Hinckley admonished leaders to be sure investigators are ready to be baptized, and he reiterated his counsel that every new member needs a friend, a responsibility, and nourishment with the word of God. “Every convert is worth saving. I am convinced we do not need to suffer losses among those who come into the Church,” President Hinckley said.

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke of receiving direction through the Holy Ghost. “The language of the Church is the language of the Spirit,” he said.

President Packer showed a

pair of sextants, used by sailors for centuries to find their courses across the sea. “The Holy Ghost is like a sextant,” he said. Just as light from the heavens could keep sailors from losing their way, the light of the Holy Ghost can help us stay on the right course.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles continued the theme of being guided by revelation, teaching that it is the duty of Church leaders to receive for themselves the knowledge that Jesus is the Christ and to teach it to others.

Elder Maxwell reiterated President Brigham Young’s assertion that “we live far beneath our privileges” in terms of receiving revelation from God for guidance (see *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1954], 32). Elder Maxwell counseled: “To the degree that we cease to live beneath our privileges, we can lift the Church.”

But he cautioned, “Revelation is not a matter of pushing buttons but of pushing ourselves, often aided by fasting and by scripture study.”

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that while Church leaders see many different levels of organization in units around the world, “the Spirit is the same.” The Church provides handbooks and other resources to guide leaders in the development of Church programs in units of every size, but development must be done carefully and in good order, he counseled. “The secret to building a ward

or branch is to know your members,” he said, and tailor the growth to their needs.

A primary goal of local leaders should be to help each member prepare for the covenants and blessings of the temple, Elder Perry taught. If priesthood leaders only help members prepare for, make, and keep these covenants, they have done what could be expected of them, regardless of the size of the ward or branch, he said.

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of the strength and joy that can come to members who faithfully obey the Lord’s standards.

Those standards for receiving temple blessings are high, and they are unchangeable, Elder Eyring pointed out. Priesthood leaders must uphold these standards “clearly and without apology.”

The Lord’s standards are not given to keep people from Him but to draw more people to Him, Elder Eyring explained, testifying that as leaders hold the Lord’s standards high, more people will come to baptism and follow the pathway that leads them to Christ.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles offered counsel on strengthening families.

“Remember, the Church is organized to assist families,” he said.

Referring to “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102), Elder Ballard suggested that both parents and Church teachers review the proclamation regularly to help them support its principles. He cited other gospel-based resources to help strengthen families, including manuals, Church magazines, and family home evening. Elder Ballard urged priesthood leaders to

be aware of these resources and encourage members to use them.

He also called on priesthood leaders to give strong support to the goal of temple marriage among members because of the blessings it brings to families and to the Church. Members who have not made or learned to keep temple covenants have not taken advantage of all the blessings the gospel has to offer, Elder Ballard said, referring to counsel from President Hinckley. ■

## New Site Encourages Provident Living

By Lisa Ann Jackson

Say you would like to develop your food storage but you aren’t sure how to begin. Perhaps you are burdened with debt and would like to become debt free. Maybe you are looking for a new job or additional education and training. Or maybe you suffer from emotional challenges that are too difficult to manage alone.

With the launch of the new Church Web site [www.providentliving.org](http://www.providentliving.org), gospel-based guidance for these and other situations has been brought together to provide how-to assistance for managing a wide range of temporal affairs.

“The philosophy behind the site is really in its name,” says Jeff Newey, project manager of Provident Living. “It was created so people could learn to live more providently.”

Using universal gospel

principles of welfare, self-reliance, and providence, the site focuses on eight areas: helps for Church leaders, physical health, social and emotional strength, educational literacy, employment, resource management, food storage and emergency preparedness, and caring for others.

Through these areas of focus, users will find articles from Church leaders and industry experts, instructional material from Church lesson manuals, interactive tools such as a food storage calculator and career tutorials, and practical how-to information on topics ranging from job interview skills to gardening. Users will also find information such as job listings, resources for adoptive and birth parents, food storage guidelines, instructions for compiling humanitarian kits, and tools to help find



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE BUNDERSON

**Church leaders were recently reminded to help each member prepare for and receive the blessings of the temple.**



**Offering resources in eight areas, the Provident Living Web site promotes spiritual and temporal welfare.**

educational programs around the world.

“Never before in my life has the doctrine of self-reliance been more needed to be preached and encouraged for the benefit of the Saints,” said Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in October 1991 general conference (“Becoming Self-Reliant,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 65). Church leaders continue to preach the importance of

self-reliance and provident living. With the development of the Provident Living site comes a practical, gospel-oriented resource to help people manage their temporal needs.

“We teach emphatically the importance of self-reliance, the importance of education, of equipping our people so they can earn a living; the importance of saving and being prudent in the management of their affairs; the

importance of setting something aside, a reserve, to take care of their needs if there should come a rainy day in

their lives,” says President Hinckley (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 585). ■

## Church Donates Books, Refurbishes Wells in Ghana

Latter-day Saint Charities, the distribution arm of the Church’s Humanitarian Services, presented 12 shipment containers full of thousands of educational books to Ghana’s minister of education in November, reported the *Accra Daily Mail*.

“Through education our country gets ahead,” says education minister Professor Christopher Ameyaw-Akumfi. “Many have and will benefit by your humanitarian aid.”

Brother Edward Richard K. Dwemoh represented Latter-day Saint Charities in presenting the books. “Knowledge is power, and through studying books most of us have changed attitudes,” he said.

Elder Neil Darlington,

director of Latter-day Saint Charities in Ghana, added, “The real value of a book . . . becomes priceless when parents, children, and teachers read . . . to gain wisdom.”

In addition to donating books, Latter-day Saint Charities is also refurbishing wells, called boreholes, in villages in the Takoradi and Assin Foso areas of Ghana. As of January the organization had completed 40 refurbishing projects and had begun an additional 50 projects.

Latter-day Saint Charities worked with local priesthood leaders and local Peace Corps workers to determine which villages were in greatest need to have their wells repaired.

One of the restored boreholes is in Assin Brofoyedur. The chief, Dumpah II, expressed gratitude “for . . . making it possible for the well to work again.” About 800 villagers benefit from this one borehole.

The village of Achowa also received a refurbished well. Since the well stopped working 14 months earlier, about 500 residents in the village have had access only to ground water that they could catch in a rainstorm.

Village chief Nana Domkor III of Fasin expressed the feelings of many villagers, repeating, “May God bless you, may God bless you!” ■

## 2003 Church Pageant Schedule

Pageant	Location	Date
<i>Jesus the Christ</i>	Mesa, Arizona	10–12 April (Spanish); 15–19 April (English)
<i>Mormon Miracle</i>	Manti, Utah	19–21, 24–28 June
<i>America’s Witness for Christ</i>	Palmyra, New York	11–12, 15–19 July
<i>And It Came to Pass</i>	Oakland, California	15–19, 22–26 July
<i>Castle Valley</i>	Castle Dale, Utah	31 July–2 August; 5–9 August
<i>City of Joseph</i>	Nauvoo, Illinois	1–2, 5–9 August
<i>Martin Harris, the Man Who Knew</i>	Clarkston, Utah	15–16, 19–23, 26–29 August

All pageants are free of charge, but the Clarkston and Oakland pageants require tickets. For more information on any of the pageants, call 1-801-240-7800 or visit [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org) and click on “Other Resources,” then “Places to Visit.”



## BYU Women's Conference to Be Broadcast in May

The 2003 Brigham Young University Women's Conference will be held 1-2 May. Selected talks will be broadcast over the Church satellite system to meetinghouses throughout the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, and Latin America from 6:00 to 10:00 P.M. mountain daylight time on the days of the conference. The broadcast can also be accessed on KBYU-TV in Utah, cable station BYUTV, BYU Radio, and on the Internet at <http://broadcasting.byu.edu>. Check local listings for specific times.

Church units in Europe, the British Isles, and South Africa will receive the broadcast later in May. Local units have been authorized to record and retain a set of the broadcasts for Church use, and members may record presentations for home use.

For more information, call 1-801-378-7692 or visit <http://womensconference.byu.edu>.

## Comment

### On Divine Love

I must comment on the article "Divine Love," written so eloquently by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (Feb. 2003, 20). I truly believe that if we study these words and feel the power in what is being taught, we will find new meaning in and a refreshed outlook on our relationship with Jesus Christ. We may truly feel His divine love, the kind of love we would feel in His presence, on the condition that we obey His will. We must get to the temple and make those divine covenants that will allow us to receive this love. How thankful I am to be a part of this glorious gospel that opens my eyes to new and greater understanding.

Amie Cotton  
Madison, Indiana

### Building for Eternity

The article "Two People Building for Eternity" (Jan. 2003, 10) touched my heart. I also have a disability that prevents me from walking well. My cane helps me to get around and do all that needs to get done.

I do not have an eternal mate, but the words of the Hiatt family have given me hope that someday it will come to pass if I have faith, keep my thoughts positive, and trust the Lord. Forty years ago, I was left alone to

raise three small sons. They are grown now and always keep in touch with me. They have a deep love for me, for which I am very grateful.

The scriptures are my constant help each day. And thank you for your special efforts as you work on the *Ensign* every month.

Marie W. Stealey  
Paradise, California

### Correction

The article "Ordinance Index On-Line" (Feb. 2003, 77), announced that ordinance information for deceased individuals is available on [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org). Ordinance information is found in the International Genealogical Index (IGI) listing. To access ordinance information, members of the Church must register on the FamilySearch Web site and sign on. Click on "Sign On" in the upper right corner to do this. Members will need their membership record number and confirmation date for the registration process. Ward and branch clerks can provide this information. Once registered and

signed on, search for an individual's name. The ordinance information, if available, will appear with the name in the IGI listing. *Members must be registered and signed on to the site for this information to appear, and the information will appear only in the IGI listing.* ■

### Call for Articles

If you have had experience pertaining to the following, we invite you to share your suggestions:

*As a young single adult, how can I maintain a positive atmosphere in my apartment and have good relationships with my roommates when their lifestyles conflict with my Latter-day Saint values and standards?*

Send responses by 15 May 2003 to *Ensign* Editorial, 24th Floor, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3224, USA, or to **cur-editorial-ensign@ldschurch.org**. Clearly mark your submission "Questions and Answers," and on the top of your submission, write your name, address, telephone number, ward, and stake (or branch and district).

While we cannot acknowledge receipt of individual responses, authors whose submissions are selected for publication will be notified. If you would like your manuscript returned, enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope and allow up to a year.





# MAKING THE MOST OF THIS ISSUE

A P R I L 2 0 0 3

change frustration into peace.

- One person's determination to keep the Sabbath day holy can strengthen an entire family. See page 69.

- Little children can teach their parents profound lessons. See "Lynette's Testimony," page 70.

- How could a work-free Saturday increase your desire to keep the Sabbath holy? Turn to page 73 to find out.

## Coming to Know the Savior

Sunday School classes will soon be discussing what happened during the final week of Jesus' mortal life. This month's issue contains several resources to deepen your understanding of the Savior:

- The testimony of a modern prophet, seer, and revelator that He is risen, page 2.

- Photographs of many sacred sites in Jerusalem, page 12.

- An article featuring the words of Jesus on death and resurrection, page 22.

- A time line of events, travels, sermons, miracles, and parables during His last days in mortality, page 26.

- Two articles that challenge us to consider our response to the Savior's dinner invitation, pages 51 and 64.

## Blessings of the Restoration

"We are blessed to know things that simply transform the landscape of life," writes Elder Neal A.

Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. In "The Wondrous Restoration," he explores vital Restoration doctrines that can increase our enthusiasm for missionary work. See page 30.

## Home Teachers, Visiting Teachers

Find the monthly messages on pages 2 and 74.

## Did you know?



Some families keep the art from inside front and back covers of the *Ensign* and articles like "Jerusalem" (page 12) for teaching lessons in family home

evening or Church classrooms. Each year, the *Ensign* supports the Sunday School curriculum course of study—this year the New Testament—and offers many valuable illustrations for teaching at home and at church.

## Sharing the Gospel

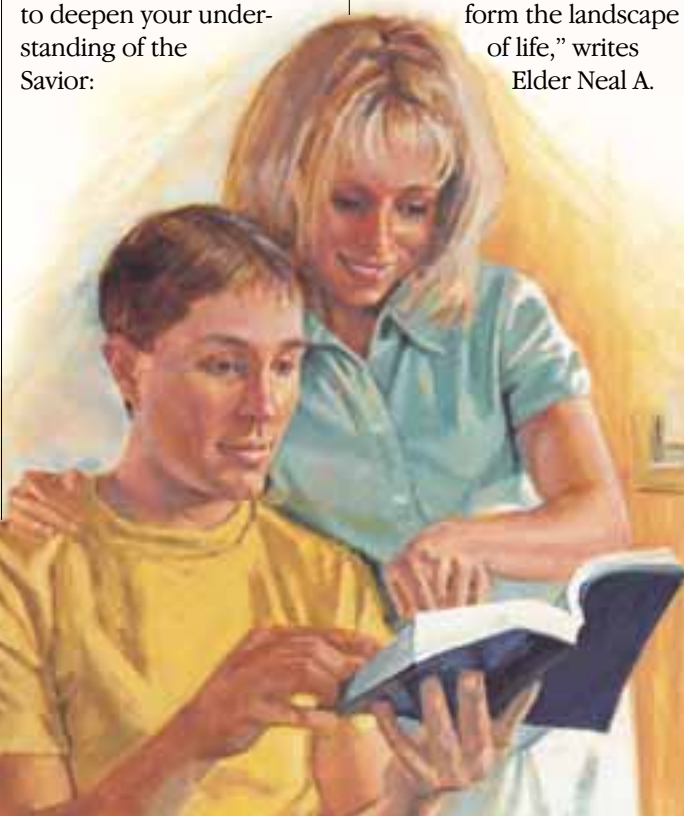
- Have you been looking for something to help you share your testimony of Jesus Christ with family or friends? It's here, with *Finding Faith in Jesus Christ*, the DVD that came with this magazine. See page 8.

- Each year at the Easter season, thousands of visitors stream onto the grounds of the Mesa Arizona Temple for the nightly pageant performances involving hundreds of Latter-day Saint volunteers. To read conversion stories from this missionary event in the Valley of the Sun, turn to page 38.

- "If I had not become sick, I would still be searching for purpose in my life." To see how a serious illness turned into a great blessing, turn to page 68.

## Strengthening Your Family

- Family prayer had become a time of frustration for one family. Turn to page 57 to see what they did to



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**For She Loved Much, by Jeffrey Hein**

*“And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, . . . and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. . . . Wherefore [Jesus said], Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much” (Luke 7:37–38, 47).*



**Clockwise from top: A minaret, a traditional feature of a mosque; a view of the city from Brigham Young University's Jerusalem Center; possibly Golgotha, or the place of a skull; at Jerusalem's Western Wall.**

***“If I forget thee,  
O Jerusalem, let my  
right hand forget her  
cunning. If I do not  
remember thee, let my  
tongue cleave to the  
roof of my mouth; if I  
prefer not Jerusalem  
above my chief joy”  
(Psalm 137:5–6).  
See “Jerusalem,” p. 12.***