

THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • AUGUST 2004

# Ensign



**Love of Mother  
and Father, p. 8**

**Welcome to  
Relief Society, p. 14**

**Move More,  
Stress Less, p. 58**



**Seed of Faith, by Jay Ward**

*Young mothers such as this one were among the Anti-Nephi-Lehies who, the scriptures say, believed the gospel and “never did fall away” (Alma 23:6). Their testimonies of Christ would lead their sons who fought with the 2,000 stripling warriors to say, “We do not doubt our mothers knew it” (Alma 56:48).*

# Ensign



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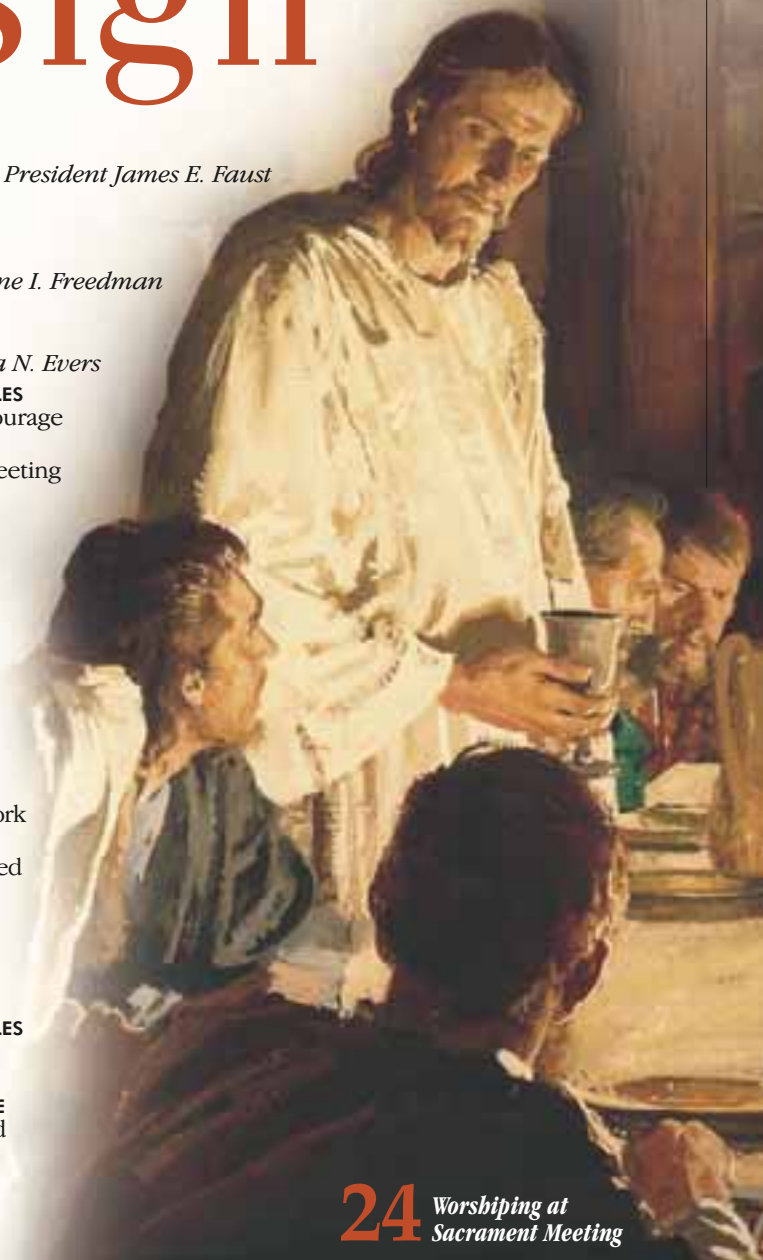


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# Fathers, Mothers, Marriage

BY PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

In recent times, society has been plagued with a cancer from which few families have escaped. I speak of the disintegration of our homes. Immediate corrective treatment is urgent. In what I have to say, I do not wish to offend anyone. I affirm my profound belief that God's greatest creation is womanhood. I also believe that there is no greater good in all the world than motherhood. The influence of a mother in the lives of her children is beyond calculation. Single parents, most of whom are mothers, perform an especially heroic service.

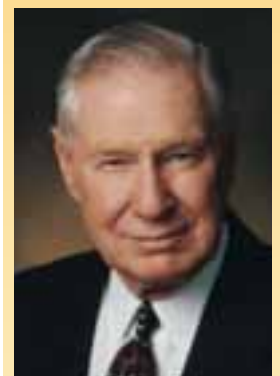
I hasten to acknowledge that there are too many husbands and fathers who are abusive to their wives and children and from whom the wives and children need protection. Yet modern sociological studies powerfully reaffirm the essential influence of a caring father in the life of a child—boy or girl. In the past 20 years, as homes and families have struggled to stay intact, sociological studies have revealed this alarming fact: much of the crime and many of the behavioral disorders in the United States come from homes where the father has

abandoned the children. In many societies, child poverty, crime, drug abuse, and family decay can be traced to conditions where the father gives no male nurturing. Sociologically, it is now painfully apparent that fathers are not optional family baggage.

Fathers need to do the best they can to be the primary provider for physical and spiritual support. I state this with no reluctance because the Lord has revealed that this obligation is placed upon husbands. "Women have claim on their husbands for their maintenance, until their husbands are taken."<sup>1</sup> Further, "all children have claim upon their parents for their maintenance until they are of age."<sup>2</sup> In addition, their spiritual welfare should be "brought to pass by the faith and covenant of their fathers."<sup>3</sup> As regards little children, the Lord has promised "that great things may be required at the hand of their fathers."<sup>4</sup>

## Complementary Roles

It is useless to debate which parent is most important. No one would doubt that



***In my opinion, members of the Church have the most effective cure for our decaying family life. It is for men, women, and children to honor and respect the divine roles of both fathers and mothers in the home.***

a mother's influence is paramount with newborns and in the first years of a child's life. The father's influence increases as the child grows older. However, each parent is necessary at various times in a child's development. Both fathers and mothers do many intrinsically different things for their children. Both are equipped to nurture children, but their approaches are different. Mothers seem to take a dominant role in preparing children to live within their families, present and future. Fathers seem best equipped to prepare children to function in the environment outside the family.

One authority states: "Studies show that fathers also have a special role to play in building a child's [self-respect]. They are important too, in ways we don't really understand, in developing internal limits and control in children." He continues: "Research also shows that fathers are critical in the establishment of gender in children. Interestingly, fatherly involvement produces stronger sexual identity and character in both boys and girls. It's well established that the masculinity of sons and the femininity of daughters are each greater when fathers are active in family life."<sup>5</sup>

Parents in any marital situation have a duty to set aside personal differences and encourage each other's righteous influence in the lives of their children.

Is it not possible to give to womankind all of the rights and blessings that come from God and legal authority without diminishing the nobility of God's other grand creation, manhood? A reflection on this theme stated in 1872:

"The status of women is one of the questions of the day. Socially and politically it forces itself upon the attention of the world. Some . . . refuse to concede that woman is entitled to the enjoyment of any rights other than . . . the whims, fancies or justice . . . men may choose to grant her. The reasons which they cannot meet with argument they decry and ridicule; an old refuge for those opposed to

correct principles which they are unable to controvert. Others . . . not only recognize that woman's status should be improved, but are so radical in their extreme theories that they would set her in antagonism to man, assume for her a separate and opposing existence; and to show how entirely independent she should be [they] would make her adopt the more reprehensible phases of character which men present, and which should be shunned or improved by them instead of being copied by women. These are two extremes, and between them is the 'golden mean.'<sup>6</sup>



***It is useless to debate which parent is most important. No one would doubt that a mother's influence is paramount with newborns and in the first years of a child's life. The father's influence increases as the child grows older.***

### **Use of the Priesthood**

Many people do not understand our belief that God has wisely established a guiding authority for the most important institutions in the world. This guiding authority is called the priesthood. The priesthood is held in trust to be used to bless all of God's children. Priesthood is not gender; it is blessings from God for all at the hands of the servants He has designated. Within the Church this authority of the priesthood can bless all members through the ministration of home teachers, quorum presidents, bishops and branch presidents, fathers, and all other righteous brethren who are charged with the administration of the affairs of the kingdom of God. Priesthood is the righteous power and influence by which boys are taught in their youth and throughout their lives to honor chastity, to

be honest and industrious, and to develop respect for and stand in the defense of womanhood. Priesthood is a restraining influence. Girls are taught that through its influence and power to bless, they can fulfill many of their desires.

Honoring the priesthood means following the example of Christ and seeking to emulate His example of fatherhood. It means constant concern and caring for one's own flesh and blood. The man who holds the priesthood is to



honor it by eternally cherishing, with absolute fidelity, his wife and the mother of his children. He is to extend lifelong care and concern for his children and their children. The plea of David for his rebel son is one of the most moving in all of the scriptures: “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!”<sup>7</sup>

I urge husbands and fathers of this Church to be the kind of men your wives would not want to be without. I urge the sisters of this Church to be patient, loving, and understanding with their husbands. Those who enter into marriage should be fully prepared to establish their marriage as the first priority in their lives.

It is destructive to the feeling essential for a happy marriage for either party to say to the other marriage partner, “I don’t need you.” This is particularly so because the counsel of the Savior was and is to become one flesh: “For this cause shall a man leave father and

mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh[.] Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh.”<sup>8</sup>

#### **Being of One Heart**

It is far more difficult to be of one heart and mind than to be physically one. This unity of heart and mind is manifest in sincere expressions of “I appreciate you” and “I am proud of you.” Such domestic harmony results from forgiving and forgetting, essential elements of a maturing marriage relationship. Someone has said that we “should keep [our] eyes wide open before marriage, and half shut afterward.”<sup>9</sup> True charity ought to begin in marriage, for it is a relationship that must be rebuilt every day.

I wonder if it is possible for one marriage partner to jettison the other and become completely whole. Either partner who diminishes the divine role of the other in the presence of the children demeans the budding femininity within the daughters and the

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PHOTOGRAPH BY WANG WEI HSIANG

***The family relationship of father, mother, and child is the oldest and most enduring institution in the world. It has survived vast differences of geography and culture. This is because marriage between man and woman is a natural state and is ordained of God.***

emerging manhood of the sons. I suppose there are always some honest differences between husband and wife, but let them be settled in private.

It must be recognized that some marriages fail. To those in that circumstance I extend understanding because every divorce carries heartache with it. But at all costs couples should avoid covenant breaking. In my opinion, any promise between a man and a woman incident to a marriage ceremony rises to the dignity of a covenant. The family relationship of father, mother, and child is the oldest and most enduring institution in the world. It has survived vast differences of geography and culture. This is because marriage between man and woman is a natural state and is ordained of God. It is a moral imperative. Those marriages performed in our temples, meant to be eternal relationships, then become the most sacred covenants we can make. The sealing power given by God through Elijah is thus invoked,

and God becomes a party to the promises.

Over a lifetime of dealing with human problems, I have struggled to understand what might be considered “just cause” for breaking of covenants. I confess I do not claim the wisdom nor authority to definitely state what is “just cause.” Only the parties to the marriage can determine this. They must bear the responsibility for the train of consequences which inevitably follow if these covenants are not honored. In my opinion, “just cause” should be nothing less serious than a prolonged and apparently irredeemable relationship which is destructive of a person’s dignity as a human being.

At the same time, I have strong feelings about what is not provocation for breaking the sacred covenants of marriage. Surely it is not simply “mental distress” nor “personality differences” nor “having grown apart” nor “having fallen out of love.” This is especially so where there are children. Enduring divine counsel comes from Paul:



“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”<sup>10</sup>

“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, [and] to love their children.”<sup>11</sup>

### The Most Effective Cure

In my opinion, members of the Church have the most effective cure for our decaying family life. It is for men, women, and children to honor and respect the divine roles of both fathers and mothers in the home. In so doing, mutual respect and appreciation among the members of the Church will be fostered by the righteousness found there. In this way, the great sealing keys restored by Elijah, spoken of by Malachi, might operate “to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse.”<sup>12</sup>

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) stated concerning the keys of Elijah: “This sealing power bestowed upon Elijah, is the power which binds husbands and wives, and children to parents for time and eternity. It is the binding power existing in every Gospel ordinance. . . . It was the mission of Elijah to come, and restore it so that the curse of confusion and disorder would not exist in the kingdom of God.”<sup>13</sup> Confusion and disorder are all too common in society, but they must not be permitted to destroy our homes.

Perhaps we regard the power bestowed by Elijah as something associated only with formal ordinances performed in sacred places. But these ordinances become dynamic and productive of good only as they reveal themselves in our daily lives. Malachi said that the power of Elijah would turn the *hearts* of the fathers and the children to each other.<sup>14</sup> The heart is the center of the emotions and a conduit for revelation. This sealing power thus reveals itself in family relationships, in attributes and virtues developed in a nurturing environment, and in loving service. These are the cords that bind families together, and the priesthood advances their development. In imperceptible but real ways, “the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul [and thy home] as the dews from heaven.”<sup>15</sup>

I testify that the blessings of the priesthood, honored by

fathers and husbands and revered by wives and children, can indeed cure the cancer that plagues our society. I plead with you fathers to magnify your priesthood calling; bless your families through this sacred influence, and experience the rewards promised by our Father and God. ■

### NOTES

1. D&C 83:2.
2. D&C 83:4.
3. D&C 84:99.
4. D&C 29:48.
5. Karl Zinsmeister, “Fathers: Who Needs Them?” (address delivered to the Family Research Council, 19 June 1992).
6. “Woman’s Status,” *Woman’s Exponent*, 15 July 1872, 29.
7. 2 Samuel 18:33.
8. Matthew 19:5–6.
9. Magdeleine Scudéry, in John P. Bradley and others, comps., *The International Dictionary of Thoughts* (1969), 472.
10. Ephesians 5:25.
11. Titus 2:4.
12. D&C 110:15; see also Malachi 4:6.
13. *Elijah the Prophet and His Mission* (1957), 5.
14. See Malachi 4:5–6.
15. D&C 121:45.

## IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After you prayerfully prepare, share this message using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach.

1. Read the paragraph in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” beginning, “Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children” (*Liahona*, Oct. 1998, 24; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102). Ask how this responsibility is shared by every family member and individual child of God.

2. Read the third paragraph after the heading “Being of One Heart” in President Faust’s message. Ask family members what covenants are and with whom temple covenants are made. Emphasize the sacred nature of eternal marriage covenants.

3. Read President Faust’s statement that “members of the Church have the most effective cure for our decaying family life.” Ask family members to suggest what this cure might be. Then read President Faust’s ideas in the first paragraph after the heading “The Most Effective Cure.”

# LOVE OF

# Mother & Father



**BY PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH**  
(1838–1918)

*Joseph F. Smith, sixth Church President, was born on 13 November 1838 at Far West, Missouri, to Mary Fielding and Hyrum Smith. He was set apart as Church President on 17 October 1901 and served in that capacity for just over*

*17 years. In 1910 the Granite Stake set aside every Tuesday evening for a “Home Evening.” Every family was asked to be at home, and the parents were to teach their children the gospel, sing songs with them, read scriptures, play games, enjoy refreshments, and take counsel together. This practice was started after a large meeting of parents in the stake tabernacle. At this meeting President Joseph F. Smith delivered a stirring sermon on “Family Government.” The following is an excerpt from that address.*

*President Smith’s feelings on this topic are better understood in the context of his personal history. He was only 5 years old when his father was martyred, and his mother died 8 years later when he was not quite 14 years old.*

**I** learned in my childhood, as most children probably have learned, . . . that no love in all the world can equal the love of a true mother. . . . I am at a loss to know how it would be possible for anyone to love her children more truly than did my mother. . . . It was life to me; it was strength; it was encouragement; it was love that begot love or likeness in myself. I knew she loved me with all her heart. She loved her children with all her soul. She would toil and labor and sacrifice herself day and night for the temporal comforts and blessings that she could meagerly give, through the results of her own labors, to her children. There was no sacrifice of self—of her own time, of her leisure, or pleasure, or opportunities for rest—that was considered for a moment, when it came in comparison with her duty and her love to her children.

When I was 15 years of age and called to go to a foreign country to preach the gospel . . . the strongest anchor that was fixed in my life and that helped to hold my ambition and my desire steady . . . was that love which I knew she had for me, who bore me into the world.

Only a little boy, not matured at all in judgment, without the advantage of education, thrown in the midst of the greatest allurements and temptations that it was possible for any boy or any man to be subjected to—and yet,



whenever those temptations became most alluring and most tempting to me, the first thought that rose in my soul was this: "Remember the love of your mother. Remember how she strove for your welfare. Remember how willing she was to sacrifice her life for your good. Remember what she taught you in your childhood and how she insisted upon your reading the New Testament." . . . This feeling toward my mother became a defense, a barrier between me and temptation, so that I could turn aside from temptation and sin by the help of the Lord. . . .

A wife may love her husband, but it is different to that of the love of mother to her child. The true mother, the mother who has the fear of God and the love of truth in her soul, would never hide from danger or evil and leave her child exposed to it. But as natural as it is for the sparks to fly upward, as natural as it is to breathe the breath of life, if there were danger coming to her child, she would step between the child and that danger; she would defend her child to the uttermost. Her life would be nothing in the balance, in comparison with the life of her child. That

is the love of true motherhood—for children. . . . I have learned to place a high estimate upon the love of mother. I have often said, and will repeat it, that the love of a true mother comes nearer being like the love of God than any other kind of love.

The father may love his children, too; and next to the love that the mother feels for her child, unquestionably and rightfully, too, comes the love that a father feels for his child. . . . Fathers, if you wish your children to be taught in the principles of the gospel, if you wish them to love the truth and understand it, if you wish them to be obedient to and united with you, love them! And prove to them that you do love them by your every word or act to them. For your own sake, for the love that should exist between you and your boys, however wayward they might be, . . . when you speak or talk to them, do it not in anger; do it not harshly, in a condemning spirit. Speak to them kindly: get down and weep with them if necessary, and get them to shed tears with you if possible. Soften their hearts; get them to feel tenderly towards you. Use no lash and no violence, but argue, or rather reason—approach them with reason, with persuasion and love unfeigned.

With these means, if you cannot gain your boys and your girls, they will prove to be reprobate to you; and there will be no means left in the world by which you can win them to yourselves. But get them to feel as you feel, have interest in the things in which you take interest, to love the gospel as you love it, to love one another as you love them, to love their parents as the parents love the children. You can't do it any other way. You can't do it by unkindness; you cannot do it by driving—our children are like we are: we couldn't be driven; we can't be driven now. We are like some other animals that we know of in the world: You can coax them; you can lead them by holding out inducements to them and by speaking kindly to them, but you can't drive them; they won't be driven. *We* won't be driven. Men are not . . . made that way.

PAINTING BY ANNE MARIE OBORN, COURTESY OF MICHAEL MURPHY



That is not the way that God intended in the beginning to deal with his children—by force. It is all free love, free grace. The poet expressed it in these words:

*Know this, that every soul is free  
To choose his course and what he'll be;  
For this eternal truth is given:*

*That God will force no man to heaven.*

[“Know This, That Every Soul Is Free,” *Hymns*, no. 240]

You can't force your boys, nor your girls into heaven. You may force them to hell—by using harsh means in the efforts to make them good, when you yourselves are not as good as you should be. The man that will be angry at his boy and try to correct him while he is in anger is in the greatest fault; he is more to be pitied and more to be condemned than the child who has done wrong. You can only correct your children in love, in kindness—by love unfeigned, by persuasion and reason. ■

*Published in the Improvement Era, Jan. 1910, 276–79. Punctuation and paragraphing have been modernized.*



## HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Ask one group of family members to report what President Smith said in the first four paragraphs about the love of a mother. Ask another group to report what he said in the last four paragraphs to fathers. Make a brief list of what he said on a large piece of paper and display it in your home.
2. Write on paper three quotations or ideas from this article you feel your family should consider. Discuss what each quotation or idea means and how your family can apply it in the home.
3. In a loud, demanding voice, ask a family member to do something. Then, in a kind, gentle voice, ask another person to do the same thing. Read together the last three paragraphs of this article and discuss how family members can use love, not force, in their relationships.

# Walking with Richard

BY EUGENE I. FREEDMAN

*Joining the Church was far from my mind until I realized how much I wanted to be with my family for eternity.*

Growing up in New York, I was raised by wonderful parents who allowed me to think independently and experience great things. When I was in college, they allowed me to go to Bermuda for spring break. And there, on a dismal, rainy day I met Claire. She was from Oregon and was attending college in New York for a year. She had it all, except she wasn't Jewish, and she didn't drink or smoke or kiss on the first date. She was a member of a church about which I knew almost nothing—and I had little interest in learning more.

As the school year ended, Claire transferred to UCLA, and we maintained a long-distance relationship. Regardless of our seemingly irreconcilable difference in religion, we eloped three years later and were married in the middle of the night by a justice of the peace in Arizona.

I always felt that when Claire returned to the East with me she would be integrated into my circle of Jewish friends, and a reversal of her religious fervor would take

place. I soon realized, however, this would not be the case. That is when my personal “journey to Damascus” began.

## Starting Out

My journey began not with a light from heaven but rather a life from heaven—a son we named Richard. When our Ricky was six months old, he began to display abnormal eye movements. Some of the finest doctors in New York diagnosed him as having a brain tumor. The growth had formed in the front of his skull and had encompassed his optic nerves. In order to remove the tumor, they found it necessary to cut these nerves, which left Richard blind. He was given only two years to live because the tumor would surely grow again. Richard recovered well, and except for the fact that he was blind and had a limited life span before him, he was a perfectly normal baby boy.

I don't think any child has ever been loved more than was our Richard, especially because he needed it. He was happy

and bright, friendly and beautiful. He brought a joy into our hearts that was matched only by our fear for his future.

Two years later our son showed signs of intracranial pressure, and we were sure the end was near. Heroic surgery was once again performed, and after a long recuperation—which included chemotherapy and radiation—Richard was able to come home.

Our daughter, Caren, who was born on the very day of Ricky's second operation, soon became his eyes at play. She helped him avoid trees and guided his hands to the chains on the swing. Our collie dog, Duchess, sensed that Ricky had special needs; she never whined about getting kicked or stumbled over as he ran down the hall. And my wife, in order to better help our son, learned braille and became licensed to teach. I lived with fear every time I received a phone call at work, not knowing when the message would come to go home and return my little boy to the hospital. All of us did what we could to help and love Richard. We knew our time with him would not be long.

### **A Blessing from the Lord**

Through all of this, Claire's pain was magnified because of the religious schism in our home. I went to church with her occasionally, was fellowshiped by great people, and wore out ambitious missionaries. One day our home teacher and stake president, George Watkins, was visiting and happened to mention that a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles by the name of Elder Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) was coming to New York and that it was his assignment to pick up Elder Lee at the airport. I knew what a healing blessing was, and I asked President Watkins if he might arrange to have Elder Lee give my son a blessing. He felt certain there would be some time available and said he would get back to us.

Sure enough, the following day he called and arrangements were made. We met at the mission home, a beautiful old former residence on Fifth Avenue in New York City. I remember walking up a long spiral staircase and entering a large, formal living room. We sat down, and a few minutes later a striking man in a dark suit entered the room. With his hand extended, he looked me in the eye and said, "Brother Freedman, I know you are not a member of our church. Please tell me a little about yourself."

We spoke for a short while, and then he asked me, "With what would you like me to bless your son?" I thought for a moment, looked him in the eye, and said, "Elder Lee, I would like you to bless him with the restoration of his eyesight and with a long life." He and President Watkins then

laid their hands on Richard's head. I remember crying silently and listening very carefully. Elder Lee did not bless Richard with his eyesight, nor did he bless him with a long life. He blessed him that he would live long enough to fulfill the mission he was brought to this earth to perform.



***Elder Lee blessed Richard that he would live long enough to fulfill the mission he was brought to this earth to perform.***

### **Finding Answers**

A year passed, and then one morning the thing we dreaded the most happened: Ricky's speech became slurred, and he showed other familiar signs that the tumor was once again enlarged. We knew that a third operation would probably prove fatal. So before we got into the car to go to the hospital, I

took our son for a last walk down the lane where we lived. Not knowing the fate before him, he happily held my hand and described to me the familiar sounds and things that surrounded us. Those were moments I will never forget.

Miraculously he survived the operation, but he developed spinal meningitis, which sent him into a coma. Seven months later, on 30 March, he died at home. He was seven years and three months old. He would have been eight on



his next birthday, 21 December—old enough to be baptized.

That date preyed on my mind. As difficult as Richard's death was for me, it was doubly difficult for Claire because she longed to be with her family for "time and all eternity" and to share with me the opportunity of being with little Ricky again in the presence of our Father in Heaven. Claire did not realize how seriously I began to think about the very same issue. The beautiful principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ touched my heart as I sought answers with a sincere heart and real intent.

I was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the very day that Richard would have been old enough for baptism. A year later, we were sealed as a family in the temple.

#### **Gifts of a Newfound Faith**

I believe Ricky's most important mission on this earth was to bring us together as a

family, sealed together for eternity. My wife and I have been blessed to raise our daughter and three more sons with the gospel in our home. Our children have all been married in the temple and are living productive, good lives. We also now have 11 grandchildren, who bring us great joy. I know that if I live worthily, I will be able to share eternal life with my loved ones. I will once again be with my father and mother, who have passed on, and walk hand in hand with my son Richard.

God works in mysterious ways. I know we may gain "wisdom out of suffering," as the Greek playwright Aeschylus wrote ("The Sacrifice of Iphigenia"), but only if we are patient and accepting and willing to cultivate the difficult opportunities the Lord puts before us. Sometimes from the darkest soil, the most beautiful flowers are grown. ■

*Eugene I. Freedman is a member of the Edgemont 11th Ward, Provo Utah Edgemont South Stake.*

**W**hen Richard died, he was nearly old enough to be baptized. That preyed on my mind. I sought answers, and the beautiful principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ touched my heart. I was baptized on the very day that Richard would have turned eight years old.







# Welcome to *Relief Society*

*Parents, leaders, and bishops have special roles in helping young women make the transition into Relief Society.*

**BY LARENE PORTER GAUNT**  
Church Magazines

**S**ister Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society general president, and Sister Susan W. Tanner, Young Women general president, readily agree they are a team. “We have both worked in Relief Society and in Young Women,” says Sister Parkin. “We’re united because we’ve seen both sides of the spectrum. We love young women and Relief Society sisters.”

Sister Parkin and Sister Tanner know the importance of working together to help young women successfully make the transition from the Young Women program into Relief Society.

To young women, they say, Relief Society is going to be a safe place for you, a place where you can increase your testimony of the Savior and feel His love. Though you may be leaving some friends behind, you are coming into the arms of others who love you. Your circle of friends is simply growing larger.

To Relief Society sisters, they say, step out of your comfort zone and reach out to young women. Sit by them and learn their names. Share your stories with each other. The

moment you begin to share, you begin to become sisters.

To leaders, they say, work together and make a plan for each young woman that will bless her life and help her realize her divine potential.

## **A Decade of Decision**

In the decade of decision and change that marks the transition from youth to adulthood, mothers and fathers, Church leaders, and friends all play a role in helping young women progress. But parents have the primary responsibility. The process of making a transition should begin well before a young woman turns 18 and continue after she enters Relief Society.

“My mother loved the women in Relief Society as her sisters,” says Sister Parkin. “She did what was required of her with a happy heart. Her example was a blessing in my life. If every mother would bear her testimony of Relief Society to her daughter, it would change what happens to young women. A grandmother, friend, or sister who helps the young woman grow in the gospel changes that young woman and her future.

“A father also has a responsibility to encourage a daughter to bring the goodness of Relief Society into her life,” continues Sister Parkin. “One father said to his daughter, ‘I hope you make Relief Society a part of your life because it has blessed our home and helped make you the young woman you are.’”

## HELPING YOUNG WOMEN WITH THE TRANSITION TO RELIEF SOCIETY



Here are a few suggestions of what leaders can do:

1. Encourage mothers to help their daughters gain an understanding of the value of Relief Society.
2. Assign a Relief Society counselor the specific responsibility of working with young adult women until they successfully make the transition into Relief Society.
3. Provide new members of the Relief Society with meaningful callings, visiting teaching, and compassionate service assignments.
4. Have the young women and Relief Society sisters meet together occasionally in home, family, and personal enrichment meetings, with planning under the direction of both auxiliaries.
5. Emphasize provident living, home-making, and personal application of gospel principles in Mutual activities. (See suggestions included with First Presidency letter, 19 Mar. 2003.)

The bishop or branch president, Relief Society leaders, and Young Women leaders have special roles to fill. A bishop's interview is one of the most powerful tools available to help youth through this stage of life. Young Women leaders especially can help facilitate this interaction by visiting with the bishop, helping him to be aware of the young women who will be leaving their organization.

Sister Tanner encourages Young Women leaders to "chat with the parents and ask how you can help. Seek out the Relief Society leaders assigned to mentor the young women, and let them know of each young woman's talents. Be positive in all you do."

### Skirts and Scripture Study

Leaders in both organizations can work together to plan activities that will build friendships. In one ward, the young women wanted to learn to sew, so they asked the sisters in Relief Society to help. At a Mutual activity night, each young woman was paired up with a Relief Society sister who helped her make a skirt. Later the pairs finished the skirts at home. Then the young women invited the Relief Society sisters to a fashion show where the girls modeled their colorful new skirts.

In another ward, Relief Society sisters sought out the young women as partners in scripture study. They read together and checked up on each other.

In the first instance, the young women reached out to the Relief Society sisters, and in the second, the Relief Society sisters reached out to the young women. In both instances, the friendships continued and blessed the lives of all.

"It's 'hearts knit together in unity and in love'

(Mosiah 18:21)," says Sister Parkin. "You're never the same when you know someone's heart. You no longer judge others, because you understand their motives and goodness."

### Creating Sisterhood

When asked to define sisterhood, Sister Parkin and Sister Tanner agree, "It's covenant keeping."

From baptism to temple sealing, we "make and keep sacred covenants,"<sup>1</sup> says Sister Tanner. "Through covenants we are bound to our Father in Heaven. When we keep those covenants we treat others with love. That's sisterhood."

It's this covenant keeping that makes Relief Society different from other women's organizations. "I believe that womanhood in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints means active participation in Relief Society," says Sister Parkin. Relief Society should be a place where women come together in an environment that nurtures faith.

### Coming unto Christ

Together young women and Relief Society sisters expand their circle of sisterhood as they reach out to each other and come unto Christ through covenant keeping. "During this defining time in a young woman's life," says Sister Parkin, "we as parents, leaders, bishops, and friends can be a powerful influence for good. Young women, in turn, can be positive examples in our lives. We become a team; we become one." ■

#### NOTE

1. Young Women theme, in *Young Women Personal Progress* (2001), 5.



## OUR RELIEF SOCIETY HERITAGE



*"We all need to know our beginnings," says Sister Bonnie D. Parkin (left), Relief Society general president. "Relief Society was founded through a prophet and organized under the hand of God."*

*Of Relief Society's beginnings, Sister Susan W. Tanner (below), Young Women general president, says, "Young women need role models. Noble Latter-day*



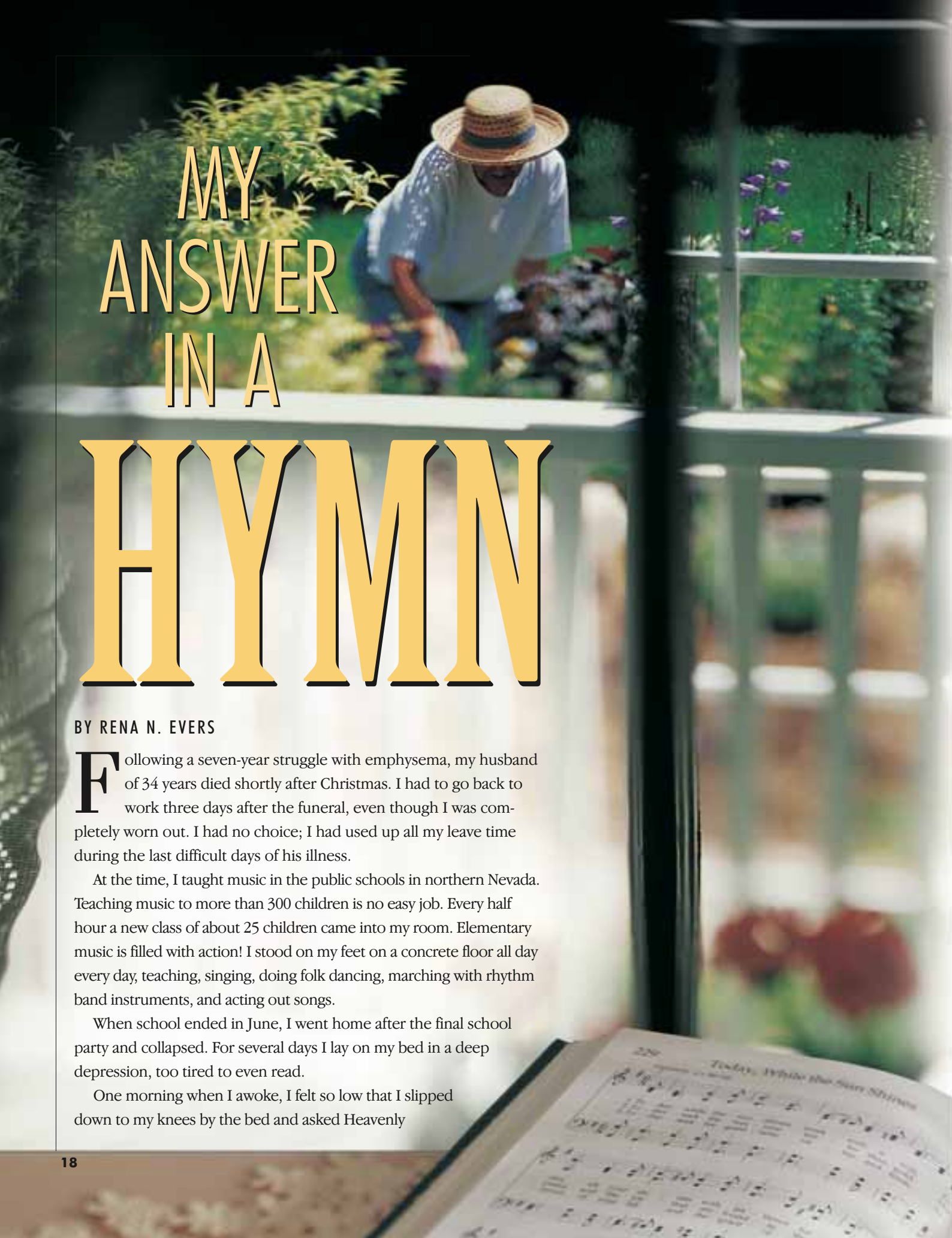
*Saint women of the past provide that. It's one of the reasons we talk about history."*

*The first Relief Society meeting also serves as a role model for all of us. "When we look at who was there, we*

*can see that there were no age barriers," says Sister Parkin. "They were all sisters. Three of them were teenagers. The oldest was in her 50s. Eleven of them were married, two were widows, and six were unmarried. That is our beginning and our foundation."*

*When we stop to think about it, we can see that ours is a powerful heritage. One young sister wrote of this realization in a letter to Sister Parkin and said that over the last few years she has learned why women talk about the history of Relief Society: "It's because we're a part of something great! Those early Latter-day Saint women took something and made it great. And I'm a part of all that. It's in my blood." ■*





# MY ANSWER IN A

# HYMN

BY RENA N. EVERS

**F**ollowing a seven-year struggle with emphysema, my husband of 34 years died shortly after Christmas. I had to go back to work three days after the funeral, even though I was completely worn out. I had no choice; I had used up all my leave time during the last difficult days of his illness.

At the time, I taught music in the public schools in northern Nevada. Teaching music to more than 300 children is no easy job. Every half hour a new class of about 25 children came into my room. Elementary music is filled with action! I stood on my feet on a concrete floor all day every day, teaching, singing, doing folk dancing, marching with rhythm band instruments, and acting out songs.

When school ended in June, I went home after the final school party and collapsed. For several days I lay on my bed in a deep depression, too tired to even read.

One morning when I awoke, I felt so low that I slipped down to my knees by the bed and asked Heavenly



## HEAVENLY FATHER LOVES US



*“Heavenly Father understands us individually. He knows how to love each of us in the way we most need it. Sometimes we feel His love through our [family members], teachers, and friends. Sometimes we feel His love through the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Sometimes we feel His love through music and hugs, through scriptures and prayers. He can encircle us in His light when we need it, because we are His children.”*

**Gayle M. Clegg, second counselor in the Primary general presidency, “The Light of His Love,” Ensign, May 2003, 112.**

Father what use there was in going on. I thought I had nothing to live for. I told Him I wished everything would just be over and that He would take me too.

It had been my habit each morning to read from the scriptures, say my prayers, and then memorize one verse of a hymn. So when I had finished my complaint to Heavenly Father (it could hardly be called a prayer), I climbed back into bed and picked up the hymnbook from the bedside table to try to memorize my one verse—although what purpose there was in this, I couldn’t imagine.

The book already lay open to a hymn I had been familiar with all my life but had always sung automatically, without paying particular attention to the words. This time, however, some of the phrases almost seemed to jump out at me:

*Today, while the sun shines, work with a will;  
Today all your duties with patience fulfill.  
Today, while the birds sing, harbor no care;  
Call life a good gift; call the world fair.*

The words of the hymn spoke to me with unusual force. I knew Heavenly Father was telling me to get up and get busy and to appreciate the life that had been given to me instead of whining over what couldn’t be helped. I went on reading:

*Today seek the treasure better than gold,  
The peace and the joy that are found in the fold.  
Today seek the gems that shine in the heart;  
While here we labor, choose the better part.*  
(“Today, While the Sun Shines,” Hymns, no. 229)

What is the fold? Members of the Lord’s kingdom are the fold, and Christ is the Good Shepherd. I was being instructed to go to church and be a faithful servant. The chorus gave more emphasis to these instructions by saying, “Work with a will” and “Your duties fulfill.”

I knew Heavenly Father had spoken to me. I got out of bed, got dressed, and began to clean up my house. I did the laundry and started weeding the yard and planting a garden.

I started singing in the ward choir again and was soon called as a counselor in the stake Relief Society. I enrolled in a class on how to teach literacy and also English as a second language. Then I went to the community college and volunteered to be an aide in a literacy class. There was only one teacher and one assistant trying to teach 60 people who couldn’t speak English, so my help was welcome. I joined two community choirs. I became so busy that I had no time to feel sorry for myself. A year after I retired from teaching, I was called to serve a mission.

Our prayers are answered in many ways. During the most challenging time of my life, the Lord gave me a message through a hymn that strengthened and blessed me. ■

*Rena N. Evers is a member of the Snow Canyon Sixth Ward, St. George Utah Snow Canyon Stake.*



## HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Sing “Today, While the Sun Shines” (*Hymns*, no. 229). Read the first four paragraphs of this article, and invite family members to suggest ideas that might be helpful. If someone mentions music as a possible solution, ask family members to suggest a hymn that might help. Read the rest of the story. Bear testimony of the value of the gospel messages found in each hymn.
2. Invite family members to share a favorite hymn and explain why they like it.



# BE STRONG AND OF A GOOD COURAGE



**BY ELDER JOHN R. GIBSON**

Area Authority Seventy  
Australia/New Zealand Area

***The scriptures contain great help for each of us in this troubled world of shifting values and tumultuous times.***

In his opening remarks at the October 2001 general conference, President Gordon B. Hinckley stated: “Wonderful as this time is, it is fraught with peril. Evil is all about us. It is attractive and tempting and in so many cases successful. . . . We see today all of these evils, more commonly and generally, than they have ever been seen before. . . . We live in a season when fierce men do terrible and despicable things. We live in a season of war. We live in a season of arrogance. We live in a season of wickedness, pornography, immorality. All of the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah haunt our society. Our young people have never faced a greater challenge. We have never seen more clearly the lecherous face of evil.”<sup>1</sup>

The scriptures contain great help for each of us in this troubled world of shifting values and tumultuous times. In Deuteronomy, Moses admonished Joshua to “be strong and of a good

courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. . . .

“And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them: and I will be with thee” (Deuteronomy 31:6, 23).

After the death of Moses, the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying: “As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

“Be strong and of a good courage. . . .

“Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, . . .

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Joshua 1:5–7, 9).

The following accounts are taken from the lives of faithful followers of Jesus Christ: one account from ancient days, the others from our time. These examples of courage illustrate steps others have taken to grow strong, examples from which we can learn much and achieve similar confidence and success as we too exercise courage.

## **Following Parents and Leaders**

The first example of strength and courage I wish to recount is found in the Book of Mormon in Alma. The 2,000 stripling sons of the people of Ammon are described as “exceedingly valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity; . . . they were men who were true at all times in



TWO THOUSAND STRIPLING WARRIORS, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG

whatsoever thing they were entrusted” (Alma 53:20).

“And they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness” (Alma 57:21).

The stripling sons indicated that “they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them” (Alma 56:47). I am sure we all remember how these young and noble warriors were protected by the hand of the Lord because of their great faith. These young men *listened* and *obeyed* and were *blessed*.

**The 2,000 stripling warriors were protected by the hand of the Lord because of their faith and obedience.**

#### **Keeping the Lord’s Standards**

The second example is a modern-day warrior in the cause of truth. Amanda Jackson, a 15-year-old Mia Maid from Melbourne, Australia, attends an Anglican girls’ school where religious studies are important. During her weekly religious education class, different religions were discussed,



***Amanda Jackson showed great courage in sharing her beliefs with her classmates.***

including The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Amanda was asked to offer a presentation about her religion. After explaining the significance of the correct name of the Church, she discussed the commandments and standards by which she lives. The students were interested to learn that Amanda kept the law of chastity and the Word of Wisdom, and they asked many questions about her beliefs. Her fellow students showed great respect for Amanda, her church, and her standards.

Speaking of the experience, Amanda said: "As I answered their questions, I tried to relate experiences when temptation had been placed before me and I had the strength to say no and walk away. The experience was a great testimony to me of the gospel. I now have friends interested in coming to church to find out more."

***Brendon Evans has found that living the gospel helps him in every aspect of his life, including his schoolwork.***

### **Making the Lord Your Priority**

Brendon Evans of Brisbane, Australia, is another example of strength through obedience. On a statewide exam in high school, Brendon received an overall position score of 1; this high academic score placed him in the top 2 percent of graduating students for the whole state of Queensland and qualified him to enter any university in Australia. At a recent ceremony, Brendon was awarded the Caltex All-Rounder Award for recognition of his scholastic, sporting, and service contributions. He was also selected as the school captain in his senior year, a position held by the most trusted and outstanding student in the school.

Brendon attributes his success to his teachers at school, his parents, and his seminary teacher. He said, "Through my own experience I have found that living the gospel and the idea of choosing the right is not something which is just important at church, but it is actually what is best for me.

For example, it is difficult to wake up and go early in the morning to seminary, but once you choose to commit yourself to it your testimony strengthens, your outlook is brighter, and even your day at school is enhanced. I feel that seminary has been an incredible advantage for me over the last four years. It is in the classroom at 6:30 A.M. every day where the Spirit is felt, knowledge is gained, and individual testimonies are discovered. In essence, I have discovered that standing up for what I believe in brings indescribable joy into my life!"

### **Enduring to the End**

The last example of outstanding courage and strength I wish to share is Stephen Bailey, who was an outstanding husband, father, and





Church leader in Perth, Australia. He served an honorable mission in New Zealand and had a strong “no fear” attitude in all things. He never tired of mentioning the gospel in his conversations and was a champion of gospel truths.

Late in 2001 Stephen was diagnosed with motor neurone disease, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease or ALS. This condition affected his muscles but not his diligence in serving the Lord nor his determination to serve others. In addition to his Church calling as regional welfare agent and previously as bishop, with the help of his family he taught institute every week. The young adults loved him. His lessons were well prepared and well presented and strengthened his students’ testimonies. As the disease progressed he lost the use of his arms, and then his voice deteriorated. He used a portable microphone and amplifier to help project the Lord’s message.

No obstacle was too great for him. He loved to teach the doctrines of the kingdom, particularly to the young people of the Church. He believed in enduring to the end. He departed this world on 30 January 2003. Among the last things he spoke about were his home teaching families, his tithing, and his Church callings.

### Achieving Our Goal

Of today’s great generation of young Latter-day Saints, President Hinckley said: “This is the season when so many of our youth show such remarkable strength and capacity and resolve to do the right thing. How marvelous is the generation with which you deal. We have never had a generation its equal in all of the history of the Church. They are better educated. They are more familiar with the

scriptures. I believe they pray with a greater measure of faith, have a greater desire to do the will of the Lord, are more active in the Church, go into the world as better prepared missionaries, and live to become better parents.”<sup>2</sup>

The Prophet Joseph Smith stated: “Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory!” (D&C 128:22). The victory we are working toward is eternal life, the greatest of all God’s gifts (see D&C 14:7). All of us can achieve this gift, but it requires great strength, courage, endurance, and a commitment to our testimonies—a profound commitment like that of Helaman’s 2,000 stripling sons. ■

### NOTES

1. “Living in the Fulness of Times,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 5–6.
2. *A Challenging Time—A Wonderful Time* (satellite broadcast address delivered to religious educators in the Church Educational System at the Salt Lake Tabernacle, 7 Feb. 2003), 2–3.



**Despite poor health, Stephen Bailey continued to influence others by teaching institute.**



**P**resident Gordon B. Hinckley said: *“This is the season when so many of our youth show such remarkable strength and capacity and resolve to do the right thing. How marvelous is the generation with which you deal. We have never had a generation its equal in all of the history of the Church. They are better educated. They are more familiar with the scriptures. I believe they pray with a greater measure of faith, have a greater desire to do the will of the Lord, are more active in the Church, go into the world as better prepared missionaries, and live to become better parents.”*



# Worshiping at Sacrament Meeting

*Sacrament meetings can be planned and conducted to help us remember the Lord and His Atonement.*

BY ELDER RUSSELL M. NELSON

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

**B**ishoprics and branch presidencies have many responsibilities that can be delegated. But they cannot delegate responsibility for sacrament meetings. Generally, they preside and are thus responsible for both the spirit and the content of these meetings. My teaching on sacrament meetings will therefore be of particular interest to bishops and branch presidents and their counselors—as well as to members of the Church participating in these weekly services.

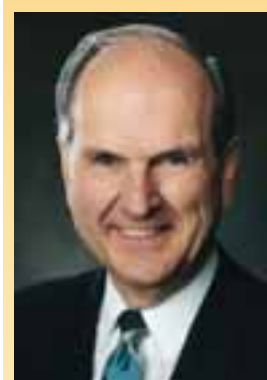
## **Doctrinal Foundation**

Sacrament meeting is the one ward or branch meeting that we attend as a family—the basic unit of the Church. Families and members need to arrive well before sacrament

meeting begins. We attend, as the Lord commanded, to receive the sacrament and renew our covenants.

He instituted the sacrament to remind us of His Atonement. As a final and specially prepared Passover supper was ending, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to His Apostles, saying, “Take, eat” (Matthew 26:26). “This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). Then He took the cup, said a blessing of thanks, and passed it to those gathered about Him, saying, “This cup is the new testament in my blood” (Luke 22:20), “which is shed . . . for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28). “This do . . . in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do [proclaim] the Lord’s death” (1 Corinthians 11:25–26). In this way, He linked the sacrament to His impending Crucifixion.

God had declared, “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Then the Son of God voluntarily laid down His life to complete the will of His Father. Thus,



*I thank the Lord for the sacrament meeting and all that it has meant in my life. It has repeatedly rekindled my faith and allowed me to renew my covenants from week to week.*

immortality became a reality and eternal life a possibility for all who would ever live upon the earth.

We commemorate His Atonement in a very personal way. We bring a broken heart and a contrite spirit to our sacrament meeting. It is the highlight of our Sabbath-day observance (see D&C 59:8–13).

The sacramental prayers have been revealed by the Lord. These prayers contain covenants *and* a promise (see D&C 20:77, 79). We covenant to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and keep His commandments. We eat the broken bread in remembrance of His body.



We drink the water in remembrance of His blood that was shed for us. And we witness that we will always remember Him. The promise: we will always have His Spirit to be with us. What a blessing!

### **Planning Sacrament Meeting**

With these doctrines in mind, bishoprics and branch presidencies need to plan sacrament meetings thoughtfully in order to keep the meetings focused on the Lord and His Atonement, His example, and the doctrines of the gospel.

Invitations to speak should be extended well in advance and include a clear description of the topic assigned and time allotted, along with an offer to help. Those asked to pray should include members not often called upon. Avoid patterns of prayers given by a husband and wife at the same meeting. This conveys an unintentional message

of exclusion to those who are single. And remember: prayers are not sermons.

**W**e each need to forget our fears and sing as an opportunity to praise our Creator prayerfully.

Departing missionaries may be given an opportunity to speak in a sacrament meeting. Their family members and friends are not invited to speak. Two or more departing missionaries may speak in the same service. Returning missionaries who have served honorably should be invited to speak in sacrament meeting and be given time to share spiritual experiences and bear testimony.

Sacrament meetings afford an opportunity for youth to speak briefly on assigned gospel subjects. At other times, high councilors will be assigned by the stake president to speak.

Members may be called to serve as greeters and ushers. They can welcome worshipers and seat them comfortably, while holding a few rear and aisle seats for those with special needs.

Audiovisual materials such as video-cassettes and transparencies should not be used in a sacrament meeting.

Occasionally members may be unable to attend because of illness. In such cases, priesthood holders could be assigned by the bishop or branch president to administer the sacrament to them where they are confined.

A typical sacrament meeting will include:

- Prelude music.
- A welcome and acknowledgment of the presiding authority and representative from the high council, if assigned.
- An opening hymn and prayer.
- Ward or branch business, such as:
  - Releasing and sustaining of officers and teachers.
  - Recognizing children who advance from Primary, members called on missions or other assignments, attainments of young men and young women.
  - Presenting names of brethren to receive or advance in the Aaronic Priesthood, names of new ward or branch members.

- Confirmation of new members.
- The sacrament hymn and the administration of the sacrament.
- Gospel messages and optional additional music.
- A closing hymn and prayer.
- Postlude music.

Those to be released and sustained do not need to be presented individually. They may be proposed as groups—first those to be released, then those to be sustained in the priesthood, and those to be sustained for callings in the auxiliaries.

Sacrament meetings should begin and end on time and should not be overprogrammed. Prayer meetings need not be held before sacrament meeting. Those participating should be seated at least five minutes before the meeting begins so they can be spiritually prepared for a worshipful experience. During that quiet interval, prelude music is subdued. This is not a time for conversation or transmission of messages but a period of prayerful meditation as leaders and members prepare spiritually for the sacrament.

### Music

The hymns of the Church are the basic music for worship services and the standard for congregational singing. Other appropriate selections may be used for prelude and postlude music, choir music, and special musical selections. Opening and closing hymns are usually sung by the congregation. The sacrament hymn is *always* sung by the congregation.

Ideally, each Church unit has a choir, with an invitation to sing periodically. A choir can bless lives. Sister Nelson and I have fond memories of our participation—years ago—



in the choir of our small branch in Minneapolis, Minnesota. When we and the others came forward to sing, there were more of us in the choir than there were members remaining in the congregation.

Pianos, organs, or their electronic equivalents are the standard for use in Church meetings. If other instruments are used, their use should be in keeping with the spirit of the meeting. Instruments with a loud or less worshipful sound, such as most brass and percussion, are not appropriate for sacrament meeting. If a piano, organ, or accompanist is not available, appropriate recordings may be used for accompaniment.

The song of the righteous is a prayer unto the Lord (see D&C 25:12). Some members seem reluctant to sing, perhaps because of fear. We each need to forget our fears and sing as an opportunity to praise our Creator prayerfully. Music in sacrament meeting is for

**W**e eat the  
broken  
bread  
in remembrance  
of His body. We  
drink the water  
in remembrance  
of His blood that  
was shed for us.

worship, not performance. We must not let our sacred music slip away from us nor allow secular music to replace it.

### **Conducting Sacrament Meeting**

Bishoprics and branch presidencies have responsibility not only to plan these meetings, but to conduct them. They should do so reverently. Some in the congregation are praying for delicate promptings and communication from heaven. Establishing a spirit of reverence will help them receive those promptings. Remember: reverence invites revelation.

Those conducting the meeting begin by extending a cordial greeting. Detailed announcements are more appropriately handled some other time. Because we invite all to come unto Christ, friends and neighbors are always welcome but not expected to take the sacrament. However, it is not forbidden. They choose for themselves. We hope that newcomers among us will always be made to feel wanted and comfortable. Little children, as sinless beneficiaries of the Lord's Atonement, may partake of the sacrament as they prepare for covenants that they will make later in life.

Our meetings are always to be conducted as directed by the Spirit (see D&C 46:2). Occasionally something unexpected may arise that a presiding officer may wish to clarify or correct, as prompted by the Spirit. Otherwise, no additional commentary is given after the final speaker has spoken.

### **Administration of the Sacrament**

Bishoprics and branch presidencies preside over the Aaronic Priesthood in wards and branches. They, along with quorum advisers, will take every precaution to see that the sacrament is prepared in advance of the meeting and that the passing of the sacrament has been thoroughly planned. Those who administer the sacrament are to look their best and be dressed appropriately. White shirts not only look nice, but they are a gentle reminder of other sacred rites, such as baptismal and temple ordinances, at which white clothing is also worn.

**E**ach member of the Church bears responsibility for the spiritual enrichment that can come from a sacrament meeting.

Sacramental prayers are to be offered *understandably* because he who prays is giving voice to covenants that others are making. Cleanliness and purity of heart are expected of those privileged to bless the sacrament. The presiding authority receives the sacrament first.

### **Fast and Testimony Meeting**

Fast and testimony meetings are held once a month, usually the first Sunday. Generally, babies are blessed on that day. After the sacrament, the conducting brother bears a brief testimony. He then invites members to bear brief, heartfelt testimonies of the Savior, His teachings, and the Restoration. Parents and teachers should help children learn what a testimony is and when it is appropriate for them to express it. Younger children should learn to share their testimonies at home or in Primary until they are old enough to bear an appropriate testimony unaided in fast and testimony meeting.

### **Personal Participation**

Each member of the Church bears responsibility for the spiritual enrichment that can come from a sacrament meeting. Each should sing with a grateful heart and respond with an audible "amen" at the conclusion of a prayer or a testimony. We personally ponder the Atonement of Jesus Christ. We reflect upon the significance of His suffering at Gethsemane and His Crucifixion on Calvary. At this time, each of us is to "examine himself" (1 Corinthians 11:28) and reflect upon personal covenants made with the Lord. At this time, we meditate upon the sacred things of God.

Gratefully, I thank the Lord for the sacrament meeting and all that it has meant in my life. It has repeatedly rekindled my faith and allowed me to renew my covenants from week to week, helping Sister Nelson and me to live and rear our family in the glorious light of the gospel. ■

*Adapted from an address given at a worldwide leadership training meeting on 21 June 2003.*



# AN *Unexpected* HEALING



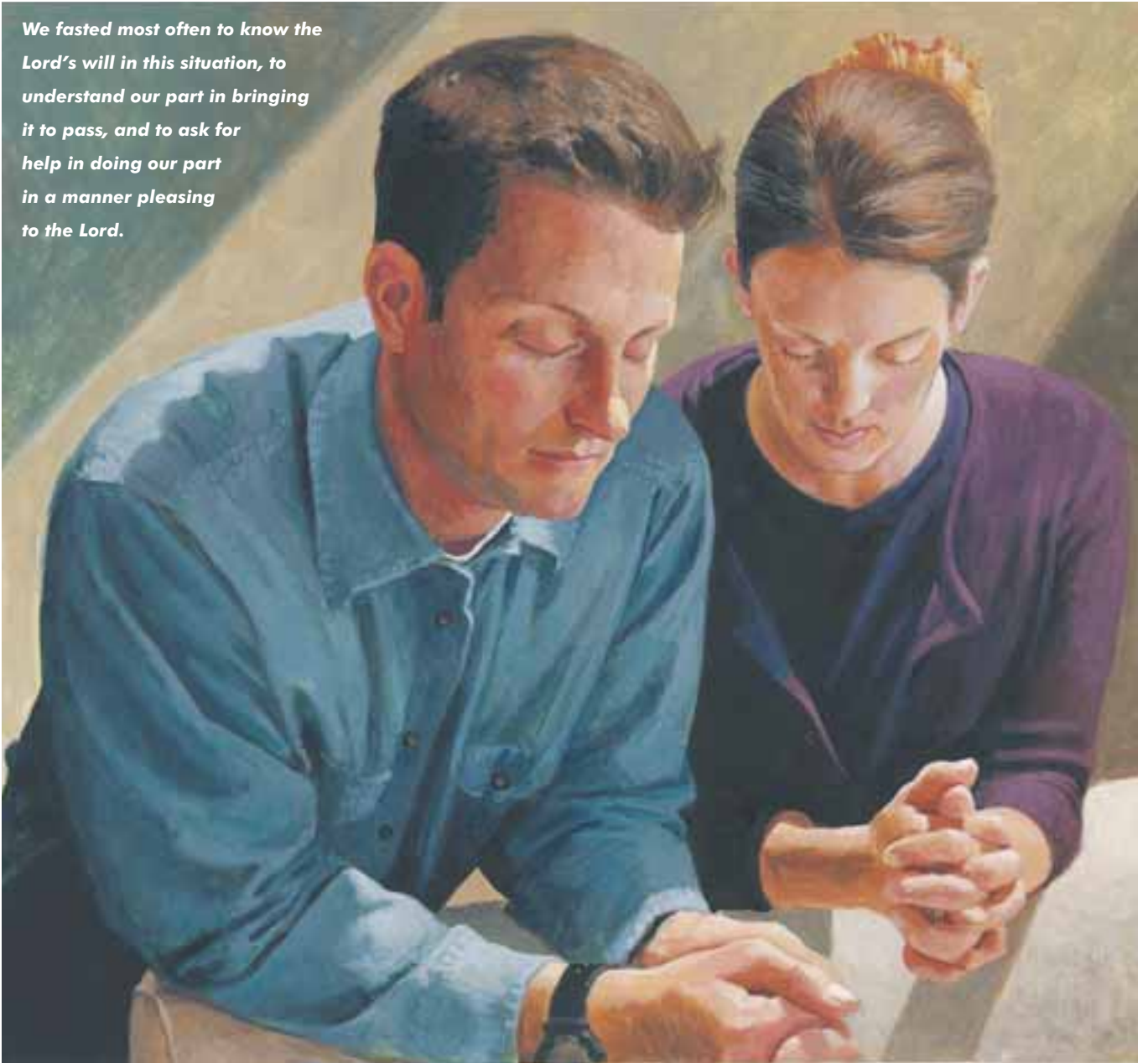
*There was little we could do  
when a family member became  
terminally ill, but fasting gave  
us access to all the Lord could do.*

BY MARY WHALEY

**S**everal years ago my younger brother, Jon, was diagnosed with a terminal illness. We were told there was nothing we could do: no medication, no procedure, no therapy. Nothing was going to change the inevitable outcome of his disease.

I cannot begin to describe the anguish our family knew when we heard the diagnosis. We were heartbroken at the thought of our brother suffering, at the possibility of his very small son growing up without a father, and of his wife being denied his association. Selfishly, I hated feeling pathetically inadequate and helpless to change any of those things.

*We fasted most often to know the Lord's will in this situation, to understand our part in bringing it to pass, and to ask for help in doing our part in a manner pleasing to the Lord.*



Then my husband, Jay, and I remembered the law of the fast. We are converts to the Church and feel grateful for truths learned through the restored gospel. The law of the fast is one of those truths. Turning to this divine spiritual practice, we realized we were not helpless after all; here was something we could do. And because fasting with prayer is the Lord's law, it gave us access to all He can do—and He can do anything. What a tremendous difference this realization made in our attitudes, our outlook, our energies—to know that we were not necessarily limited by the perspective of the worldly experts. Anything was possible, if it were the Lord's will.

In the two and a half years following my brother's

diagnosis, Jay and I fasted often and for many different reasons related to Jon's health. We fasted most often to know the Lord's will in this situation, to understand our part in bringing it to pass, and to ask for help in doing our part in a manner pleasing to the Lord. And while there was no miraculous physical healing for my brother, I witnessed a real and miraculous healing in me.

My feelings of insignificance gave way to a sure knowledge that Heavenly Father loved me, He loved my brother, and He loved our family. My sense of helplessness turned to a profound confidence in the vast resources available to anyone who draws near to the Lord. The grief and broken heart were replaced with an overwhelming



sense of gratitude for the blessing this brother had been in my life and for his example of loyalty, of courage, and of living with a grateful heart.

I recognized that while I was losing much, it was possible only because I had been given so much, and that the Lord continues to give abundantly. I was given a testimony of the nature of eternity and the eternal nature of families, and I was reminded of the promise given through the Prophet Joseph Smith that the “same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory” (D&C 130:2).

I had prayed for the opportunity to enjoy my brother’s company on earth a little while longer. Yet I have been given the opportunity to enjoy his company through all eternity. And for the 31 years while Jon was with us on this earth, I was given a preview of what that eternity with my brother might be like.

I have been given a testimony of our Heavenly Father’s unfailing love for each of us. I can now say, as did the Apostle Paul, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38–39).

The healing and peace I experienced through fasting several years ago continue to be available to me today and are not limited to matters of health. The power of fasting can be brought into many situations in all our lives. I think of some of the concerns we face in our wards, our families, or in our individual lives where we might feel there is nothing we can do. The adversary, I am

convinced, has a vested interest in our believing that. If we believe there is nothing we can do, we will do nothing.

The adversary would have us believe there is nothing we can do to bring back into activity an individual whose testimony has faltered, who has shown no interest in Church activity for years. But fasting is something we can do to invite the Spirit to touch that individual’s life with a desire to come back and enjoy all the blessings of the gospel.

The adversary would have us believe there is nothing we can do to obtain secure employment in an uncertain economy. Fasting is something we can do to connect ourselves and others with real opportunities. More important, through fasting we can gain the absolute confidence that our Heavenly Father, who feeds the fowls of the air and clothes the flowers of the field, will surely provide for His children.

Maybe we feel there is nothing we can do to change a lifelong habit of poor financial management, or poor time management, poor home management, or unhealthy habits related to nutrition and fitness, or attitudes and temperament. But fasting is something we can do to see ourselves clearly as the person Heavenly Father intended us to be and to gain insights into how we can grow and progress through eternity.

I know God lives and loves us. I know Jesus Christ is His Son and the Savior of mankind.

I do not know how the Atonement was accomplished, but I do know that every good thing comes through it and I do know that it was something only He could do, when there was nothing more we could do. ■

*Mary Whaley is a member of the Franklin Ward, Oakton Virginia Stake.*



JOURNEY'S END, BY DEREK AND JOYNN M. HEGSTED

**F**or I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38–39).

# CARRY ON! CARRY ON!

BY JANET  
PETERSON

*Born in 1853, former Young Women general president Ruth May Fox lived 104 years. Her vigorous life exemplifies resilience and enduring to the end.*

Of her 1867 trek across the American plains as a 13-year-old, Ruth May wrote: “One crack of [the captain’s] whip on the tent or wagon cover, whether at 3 A.M. or 5 A.M. meant ‘roll out.’ Killing snakes, plodding through the burning sands, wading streams, climbing mountains with sometimes an Indian scare . . . were trifles. . . . But withal we could still sing:

*And when we think of Zion’s land.  
We’ll forget the wet and pain.  
So get up my lads, gee, whoa,  
Push on, my lads, hi, ho,  
For there’s none can lead a life  
Like we merry Mormons do.<sup>1</sup>*

For Ruth, the trek west was a great adventure. When she reached Independence Rock, a granite outcropping on which passersby in pioneer times often painted or chiseled their names, she eagerly climbed it and chiseled her name: *RUTH MAY, 1867.*<sup>2</sup>

Sixty-four years later, in 1931, a still hearty 77-year-old Ruth climbed Independence Rock again. Now general president of the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association (YLMIA), Ruth found her name still legible in the granite.

Like the Wyoming outcropping of solid granite into which she carved her name, Ruth maintained her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and endured. She became the mother of 12 children, served in the YLMIA for four decades, and championed woman suffrage and Utah statehood. In the process, she overcame a troubled childhood and used those challenges to inspire youth. As both a pioneer and a modern woman, she serves as a remarkable example of faith and commitment.



Ruth May, age 3, in England (left).



Ruth May (right) about the time she crossed the plains, like thousands of others (left).



Independence Rock, Wyoming (right).



In England and Utah, Ruth May worked as a mill worker (right).



### Giving Hope and Courage

Ruth was 75 years old on 28 March 1929 when she was called to be the general president of the YLMIA. Though she had served for 24 years as first counselor, she was still surprised. When she mentioned her concerns about her age to President Heber J. Grant (1856–1945), he handed her a poem paying tribute to the idea that age was a quality of mind. Still strong and healthy, Ruth understood and accepted graciously. When President Grant set Ruth apart, he blessed her that she would have “the same vigor of body and of mind in the future” that she enjoyed in the past and “great joy, peace and happiness.”

At this time, America was enjoying a period of prosperity now known as the “Roaring Twenties.” But the stock market crash in October 1929 plunged the world into the Great Depression. This was a time when hope and courage were needed to buoy the human spirit.

During the months following the crash, the YLMIA and YMMIA (Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association) had to make plans for the June 1930

centennial celebration of the organization of the Church. They chose as their theme “Onward with Mormon Ideals,” suggesting that young people build on the foundations laid by their ancestors and carry on the work of the Church. That idea took root in Ruth’s mind, and she wrote the words to a new song titled “Carry On”:



*Firm as the mountains around us,  
Stalwart and brave we stand  
On the rock our fathers planted  
For us in this goodly land—  
The rock of honor and virtue,  
Of faith in the living God.  
They raised his banner triumphant—  
Over the desert sod.*

*And we hear the desert singing:  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!  
Hills and vales and mountains  
ringing:  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!  
Holding aloft our colors,  
We march in the glorious dawn.  
O youth of the noble birthright,  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!<sup>3</sup>*



**Above: Ruth May Fox (in the large white hat), with her YLMIA presidency and others, visited Church historical sites, including Independence Rock in Wyoming. Above center: Musical score for “Carry On,” written by Ruth May Fox for the 1930 centennial celebration of the organization of the Church. Above right: An MIA jubilee badge, 1925.**

The youth had their anthem. Hope and courage flooded the Sunday evening session of the conference held in the Tabernacle on 8 June 1930 as young people sang, “Carry on, carry on.” When they reached the climax of the chorus, they waved their gold and green programs. Tears flowed. Joy and resolve filled the hearts of those in attendance. Ruth commented, “I was thrilled to hear an army of young men and women vocalizing the pledge to continue the work of their noble fathers.”

Ruth May Fox knew firsthand the joy that comes from “carrying on.” In her own life, she had raised her “banner triumphant” as she overcame personal challenges through her “faith in the living God.”



Ruth in a dress of her own making.



Ruth's cameo brooch.



Ruth with one of her 12 children.



Silver Beehive award necklace, 1915.



She was born on 16 November 1853 in Wiltshire, England, to James and Mary Ann Harding May, who joined the Church a few months later. However, when Ruth was just 16 months old, her mother died in childbirth along with the baby. James could not care for Ruth by himself, so she stayed in numerous homes before she was eight years old. This frequent moving not only interrupted her schooling but also left her confused and frustrated. Her longest and last stay was with her Grandmother and Grandfather May.

“She’s a bad maid, she’s a bad maid,” Grandmother May said of Ruth, who had tried her grandmother’s patience by taking a bite out of a china saucer, catching her hair on fire with a candle, and stepping in front of an oncoming train.

But James loved eight-year-old Ruth, who could recite poetry and verses from the Bible. He wanted a better life for them, so in 1861 they moved to

Yorkshire, where James could earn more money. The ultimate goal was to join the Saints in Zion.

### Two Years to Zion

Peace and order returned to Ruth’s life when she and her father moved into a Yorkshire boarding house run by a kind Latter-day Saint woman, Mary Saxton. Here Ruth found more than room and board; she found family. Mary, who had divorced her abusive husband, had a daughter named Clara, who was the same age as Ruth. The two became friends. James and Mary fell in love and became engaged.

James immigrated to America in March 1865, and by September he had earned enough money to send for Mary, Clara, and Ruth. James and Mary married as soon as they arrived in Pennsylvania. Eventually James was called to serve as branch president. Ruth said of her new mother, “She proved to be a good wife and mother, and my debt to her is great indeed.”

Ruth and Clara immediately went to work in the cotton mill where James was employed. All three saved their money for the trek west. In July 1867 the Mays started west. An unexpected day’s stay at Niagara Falls was “a glorious treat” for Ruth. That contrasted with the night they spent on the Missouri River on a cattle boat, about which Ruth commented, “You may be sure there was bellowing a plenty, but what did that matter? We were on our way to Zion.”

Ruth thrived in Deseret, the home of the Saints, though she still

worked in the mills. Living the gospel among other Latter-day Saints was enough. By the time she was 19 and met Jesse W. Fox, she had had many friends and beaux.

Ruth and Jesse fell in love and married on 8 May 1873 at the Endowment House. Following the wedding, the newlyweds rode in an open carriage to Jesse’s parents’ home for a family celebration. Jesse had had a special three-tiered wedding cake made for the occasion; it was decorated with two adult foxes and six little foxes to represent him, Ruth, and their future children. His prediction was only half right, for they eventually had 12 children: six boys and six girls.



**The family of Jesse W. Jr. and Ruth May Fox: (left to right, front row) Leonard, Florence, Beryl, Emmeline (who died in 1914); (middle row) Frank, Jesse W. Jr., Ruth C., Ruth May Fox; (back row) Vida, Feramorz, Jesse, George, and Lester. Eliza May Fox (in framed picture) died in infancy.**

Ruth served 24 years as first counselor in the YLMIA.



Ruth was counselor to YLMIA president Martha H. Tingey.



YWMIA pendant.



Church centennial pageant, 1930.



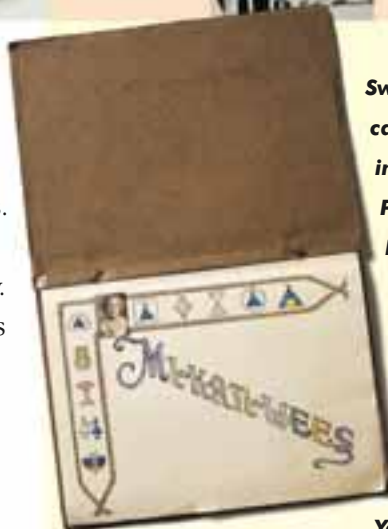
1934 Beehive manual, when YLMIA became YWMIA.

### Learning Life's Lessons

Ruth taught her children to work—the girls helped with housework, and the boys took care of the chickens, horses, and cows. “Our children were as good as most and better than some,” wrote Ruth of her family. “They had a normal dislike for home chores and an irrepressible fondness of play. They brought their friends to join in outdoor games and we often invited them to join us at the long table in our dining room, where there were places at first for eight and soon for twelve to fifteen. There was mischief always in process, and at times tempers flared. I can’t blame my children too much for their quarrels, as I was myself quick with sharp words and could not always count to ten when provoked. . . . I improved in self-restraint through the years.”

Jesse provided well for his large family, and during the first 20 years of their marriage the Foxes prospered. During the financial crisis known as the Panic of 1893, however, they lost their dry goods business but not their farm. Although Ruth’s heart was heavy, she tried to make the best of their circumstances and even hummed as she worked around the house. The Foxes dismissed their hired help, gave increased responsibilities to their children, and rented out rooms.

When son Fera became ill and could not do much physical labor, the Foxes bought a rooming house for him to manage. Ruth described purchasing “everything in the place, including bed-bugs, cockroaches, and roomers for less than \$300.00.” Several family members, including Ruth, helped Fera by making beds, filling lamps, emptying slop jars, and sweeping.



**Sweeping changes came to the YLMIA in 1934 under President Ruth May Fox. The name was changed from Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association (YLMIA) to**

**Young Women’s Mutual Improvement Association (YWMIA). Also, 12- and 13-year-old girls became Beehive girls in YWMIA instead of Mi-Kan-Wees in Primary. Beehive girls could purchase a uniform similar to the Boy Scout uniform. Awards were sewn on the sleeve (below right). Because of hard times during the Great Depression, girls could instead purchase a blue felt bandolo for their award badges (right) and a hat (below left).**





1936 bandolo Achievement Award pin.



Salt Lake City in 1939.



Ruth served under President Heber J. Grant.



Ruth served as YLMIA/YWMIA president from 1929 to 1937.



In 1914 Ruth's 14-year-old daughter, Emmeline, died of scarlet fever. Two years later, Ruth's father suffered a debilitating stroke. So that she could be close to him during the day, she rented a home for him and for herself near the YLMIA offices, where she obtained work as a typist at age 63.

In 1928, three months before she was called as general president of the YLMIA, her husband, Jesse, died.

Illnesses and deaths in her family and financial losses and hardships caused Ruth to sum up her philosophy about adversity: "Life brings some hard lessons. The sturdiest plants are not grown under glass, and strength of character is not derived from the avoidance of problems."

### Personal Growth through Service

Acutely aware of her limited schooling, Ruth taught herself by reading, taking home-study courses, and observing the language spoken by educated people. By 1891 her poetry began appearing in print, making her eligible to join the Press Club, a women's literary organization. She also became a member of the Reapers' Club, organized by Emmeline B. Wells for the "social and intellectual development" of women. Sister Wells, editor of the *Woman's Exponent* and general president of the Relief Society from 1910 to 1921, had an enormous effect on Ruth's life. Of their relationship Ruth said, "I became her devoted disciple and she in turn loved me as a daughter."

Following Emmeline's example, Ruth became active in the woman suffrage movement. Although women in Utah had had the right to vote since 1870, the passage of the Edmunds-Tucker law by the U.S. Congress in 1887 rescinded

those rights. When the Utah Territorial Woman Suffrage Association was organized in 1893, Emmeline became president and Ruth, treasurer. The peak of Ruth's political activity was the year 1895, when she helped campaign for the ratification of the Utah state constitution.

In 1895 she was called as president of her ward YLMIA and to the YLMIA general board in 1898. In 1923 the YLMIA general board published *May Blossoms*, a volume of her poems.

After she was called to serve as general president of the YLMIA in 1929, she continued to educate herself and to encourage personal growth among the young women of the Church.

The Lion House was turned over to the YLMIA as a social and learning center where young women could hear book reviews and attend classes in writing, speech, charm, and religion. Also, a summer camping program for all MIA girls was announced soon after Ruth became president.

Ruth visited "most, if not all, of the stakes of Zion, including those in Canada, Mexico, and Hawaii." After a lengthy and arduous trip to visit stakes, one of Ruth's coworkers rested

in bed for a day. Ruth, who was 27 years older than her colleague, said, "Well, maybe someday I'll come to that."

Ruth's creativity and keen memory remained strong as she grew older. On one occasion when the combined YWMIA and YMMIA presidencies hosted a dinner honoring Mutual workers, she recited a lengthy poem. After she sat down, a man sitting next to her said, "I would like a copy of that poem." She responded, "I'm sorry I don't have a copy I can give you; I made it up just now."<sup>4</sup>

In 1934 the YLMIA was renamed the Young Women's



**General YWMIA presidency in 1937: Ruth May Fox, president (center); Lucy Grant Cannon, first counselor (far left); and Clarissa A. Beesley, second counselor (far right). Photo encircled by a Golden Gleaner award bracelet.**





Beehive award pin, about 1938.



Main Street in Salt Lake City in 1939.



In costume, Ruth rode in the 1947 Pioneer Day parade.



Mia Maid class pin, about 1950.



Though her eyesight never failed, Ruth learned braille just in case.

Mutual Improvement Association (YWMIA) to parallel the name of the young men's organization, the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association.

As Ruth's 84th birthday approached she thought, "It seems hardly appropriate for a woman in her 80s to be head of an organization emphasizing the word *young* in its title." She wrote to President Heber J. Grant, not asking for a release but indicating she would accept whatever decision the Brethren made. On 3 November 1937, when President Grant extended a release to her, there were 70,000 YWMIA members in 1,000 wards.

### Enjoying Learning and Family

Ruth's patriarchal blessing promised her that her last days would be her best days. Continuing her desire to learn and serve, she became more involved in Relief Society and Gospel Doctrine classes, attended the temple regularly, and frequently spoke to MIA groups. She claimed she read more after she turned 84 than she had before.

When Ruth consulted a doctor about what she described as an "occasional feeling of faintness," he suggested that she drink a cup of coffee every morning. "I was ninety-two years of age," she said. "I decided that living a few more years was not nearly as important as my example to posterity."

Ruth's last years revolved around her posterity. She gave a family dinner for each of her children when they

reached the age of 50. In turn, Ruth's family and friends celebrated her birthdays enthusiastically. Her 85th, 90th, 95th, and 100th birthday parties were held in the Beehive House and were attended by members of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve Apostles, and other Church leaders, and city and state officials.

Of the gospel, she said, "It has been my very breath, my mantle of protection against temptation, my consolation in sorrow, my joy and glory throughout all my days, and my hope of eternal life."

Ruth died on 12 April 1958, at the age of 104. At her funeral, 75 of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren sang "Carry On."

Like her name chiseled in Independence Rock, Ruth May Fox survived well the challenges of life. With her testimony firmly anchored in the gospel of Jesus Christ, Ruth was an example of one who did "carry on."

She credited her life experiences, which she said were "far beyond my fondest dreams," and her youth and vigor to the Lord, who, she said, "has always done better for me than I could have done for myself."<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, Ruth's life left a mark on more than a granite outcropping on the American plains. She was a Latter-day Saint pioneer and a modern woman whose long life made a difference. ■



**When Ruth May Fox turned 100 years old, she was featured on the cover of the Improvement Era in November 1953. Right-hand corner: Golden Gleaner award pin.**

*Janet Peterson is a member of the Brighton 11th Ward, Salt Lake Brighton Stake.*

### NOTES

1. Ruth May Fox, "My Story" (typescript, 1953). Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are from this document.
2. See Lucile C. Reading, "Ruth's Hikes," *Children's Friend*, Nov. 1969, 23.
3. *Hymns*, no. 255.
4. Personal interview with Jean Cannon Willis, 21 Nov. 1990.
5. Elsie T. Brandley, "Ruth May Fox," *Young Woman's Journal*, May 1929, 313.

# Exceedingly Great

# Faith

**F**aith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things,” wrote Alma in his great discourse on faith. “Therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true” (Alma 32:21).

The Book of Mormon is filled with stories of “exceedingly great faith” (Alma 13:3). Shown here are powerful images, created by Latter-day

Saint artists, based on some of these stories.

Moroni taught us how to gain faith and a testimony of the Book of Mormon. He wrote: “Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, . . . ponder [them] in your hearts. . . . [Then] ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye

shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:3–5).

The artists express their testimonies in the works shown on these pages. ■







**Far left: For the Blessings of Liberty (see Alma 46), by Scott M. Snow, oil on canvas, 1999. Above: Such Great Faith (see Alma 19), by Walter Rane, oil on canvas, 2003. Center left: Moroni and the Title of Liberty (see Alma 46), by Rodolfina and Rosina Ustupo, textile mola, 1967. Left: Nephi, the Tool Maker (see 1 Nephi 17:9-10, 16), by John Parrish, bronze sculpture, 2002.**

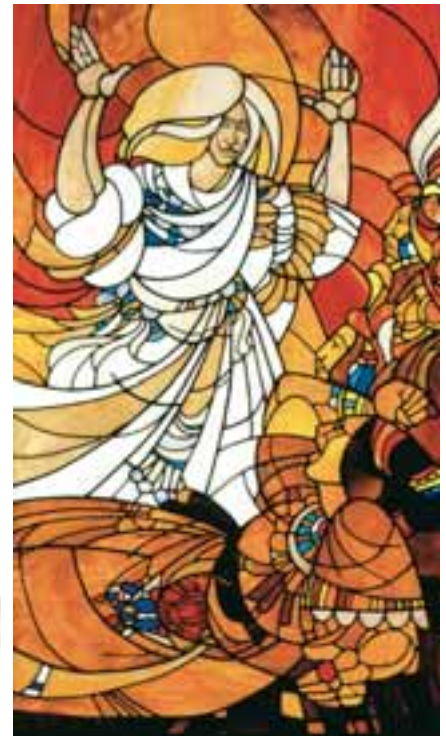
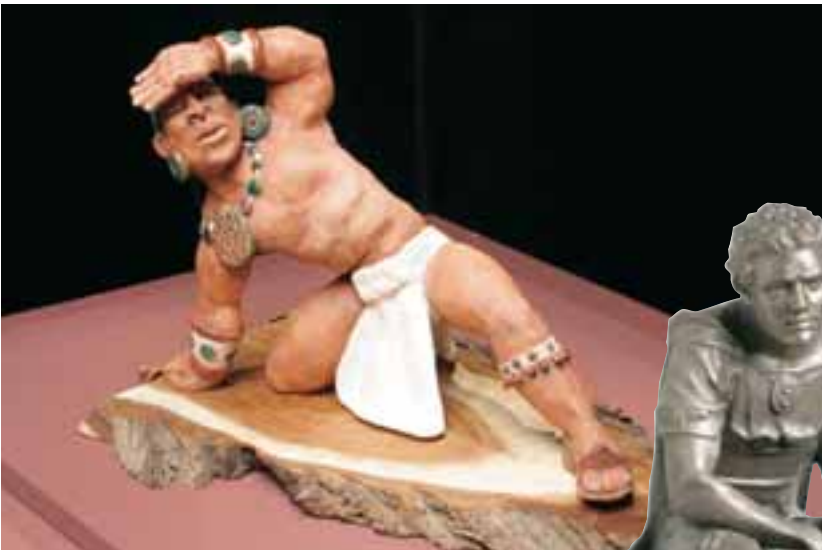




**Left:** *A New Light in the Barge* (see *Ether 2–3*), by **Trent Gudmundsen**, oil on canvas, 2002. **Above center:** *Lehi's Vision of the Tree of Life* (see *1 Nephi 8, 11*), by **Robert Yellowhair**, oil on canvas, 1990. **Above right:** *Nephi Obtains the*



*Plates from Laban* (see *1 Nephi 4*), by **Herman H. Haag**, oil on canvas, 1894. **Below left:** *The Third Time* (see *3 Nephi 11*), by **Filiberto Gutiérrez**, glazed ceramic sculpture, 2002. **Below center:** *Mormon* (see *Mormon 1:1–5; 2:16–19*), by **Eric Wilson**, bronze sculpture, 2002. **Below right:** *Alma the Younger Called to Repentance* (see *Alma 36:6–10*), by **James C. Christensen**, leaded stained glass, 1977.



# Book of Mormon before Breakfast

BY BETTY JAN MURPHY

One evening after dinner, some members of our family lingered and discussed ways to help one of our teenagers (who was not there) with his testimony. Our returned-missionary son said, "I think we should read the Book of Mormon as a family." At the moment, I doubted that studying the Book of Mormon would really solve this particular challenge. Besides, our two younger children were studying the scriptures in seminary, and I was taking an institute class with our older son. Didn't that cover our scriptural needs? But my husband thought it was a good idea and said to our son, "If you'll take the responsibility of waking everyone in the morning, we'll give it a try."

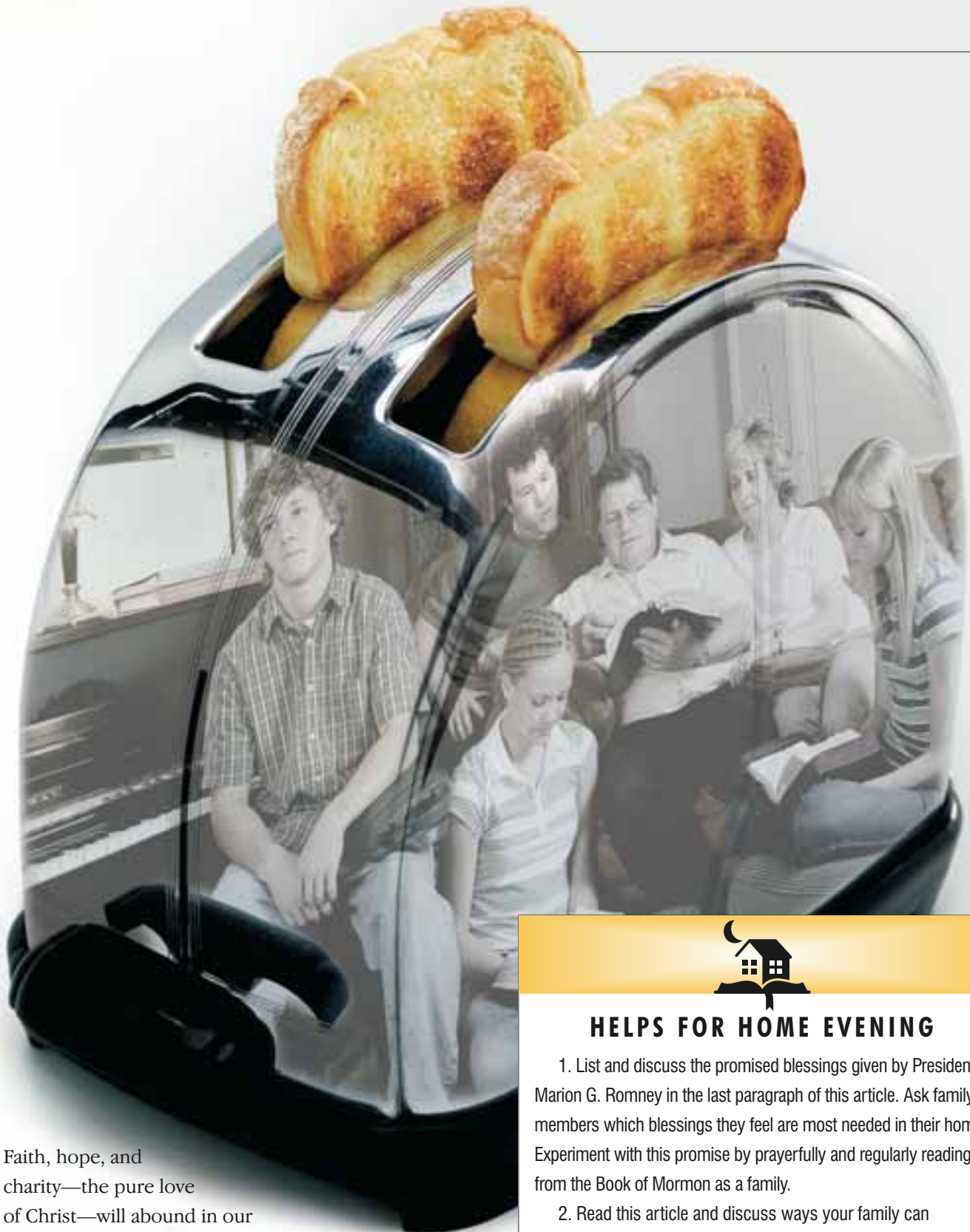
The first morning, each of the children dragged themselves into our bedroom sleepy eyed. The child we were worried about came wrapped in a blanket from his bed, hair tousled, with a look of "Let's get this over with" on his face. He promptly lay down on the floor; whether he



was awake or asleep, we could not determine. But read we did, every morning thereafter.

I don't know when I first became aware of the change, because it happened so imperceptibly. I just remember that at another dinner table conversation with everyone present, the problem we had been so worried about no longer existed.

Coincidence? Maybe, but I choose to believe that the promise given by President Marion G. Romney in general conference in April 1980 and emphasized by President Ezra Taft Benson in October 1986 had been fulfilled: "I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase; mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to the counsel of their parents. Righteousness will increase.



Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness.”<sup>1</sup> ■

*Betty Jan Murphy is a member of the Pine Ward, Payson Arizona Stake.*

**NOTE**

1. Marion G. Romney, “The Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, May 1980, 67; see also Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 7.



## HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. List and discuss the promised blessings given by President Marion G. Romney in the last paragraph of this article. Ask family members which blessings they feel are most needed in their home. Experiment with this promise by prayerfully and regularly reading from the Book of Mormon as a family.
2. Read this article and discuss ways your family can improve scripture study.
3. Share enjoyable, inspirational, or other kinds of experiences you have had with family scripture study. Read this article and bear testimony of the blessings of prayerful and regular family and personal scripture study.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT CASEY, POSED BY MODELS

# Forgiveness

## Our Challenge and Our Blessing

BY STEVE F. GILLILAND

*When we have been wronged, the first impulse of the “natural man” is to strike back. Yet forgiveness is always the Lord’s answer.*

**W**e live in a time when society emphasizes individual rights. We are told that if someone violates our rights, we should take action. Advocate groups of all kinds are ready to redress our grievances. To a certain extent, this may be good. But I believe that when we are despitely used and persecuted, we are on trial as much as our enemies are.

How can this be? When a person deprives me of my good name, my property, my sense of self-worth, or when someone violates my trust or likewise misuses a friend or family member, how am *I* on trial?

Many years ago I approached a man I respected greatly, a leader in the Church, for counsel. He shared a personal experience with me. Without revealing any personal details, he told me that a senior brother had unjustly called him to task during a Church meeting. Without learning all the facts, this brother had chastised and embarrassed him. My leader’s first impulse was to defend himself at the expense of the older man. But he paused to debate within himself: “What will this do to him? He deserves it! But it won’t help him; it will just embarrass him. Another confrontation won’t help the situation.” He bit his lip and said nothing. A few weeks later the correct information came to the senior brother, and he apologized and wept with my leader in love.

After hearing this story I wondered, “Why did he share

this with me? Is he preparing me for something?” Since that time I have indeed experienced similar situations. Once, for example, I received a letter from someone who, from my point of view, upbraided me unjustly. I was angry! I was hurt! He had no right to do that to me!

I fumed and steamed. I told my wife, Judy, and she fumed and steamed. I talked to some of my friends, and they too were irate. After seeing their reactions, however, I felt uncomfortable. I pulled back a bit and said, “Now, wait a minute, you don’t have to react that strongly.” But I had already let the cat out of the bag, and I could not control their responses. I began to wonder if my behavior had been justified. I said to myself, “I’m not helping this man, and it really did not help me to vent.”

### **Confiding in Others**

I learned that there may be times when we do need to confide in someone if we have been hurt. Yet we need to be extremely cautious in doing so, because we put a great responsibility upon our confidant’s shoulders. We offer only a limited amount of data, most of it negative. I might tell my wife about a particular person I am really frustrated with, leaving her feeling the same way I do. A week later, I may feel good about that individual because of my ongoing relationship and because I can now see our problems in the proper perspective. But Judy would not have that

new information and may still be burdened with negative feelings.

When it seems we need a listening ear, it may help to ask: "Why do I want to discuss this? Am I trying to hurt the offender and find justification for my inappropriate responses? Or am I trying to sort things out and gain a

new perspective so I can act appropriately? What effect will this have on my confidant? Can I be certain he or she will keep these things confidential?" I have learned that we need to first counsel with the Lord before we ask someone to help us.

#### **Reactions to Injustice**

Two negative reactions to injustice are common. One is to deny what is going on inside. We may say to ourselves: "What that person said hurts. I shouldn't let it affect me. It really doesn't bother me. I'm fine." Yet ignoring our feelings does not necessarily make them go away. They may continue to

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negatively influence our behavior in subtle ways without our even being aware of it.

Another reaction is to wallow in our feelings, allowing them to become an obsession. We may talk about an individual who has wronged us to anyone who will listen. Even if we never seek revenge, we may continue to dream of doing so. An old sore is never permitted to heal when it is continually rubbed.

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) shared this incident:

“[A] couple had had much trouble which culminated in divorce. The woman had acknowledged her guilt of infidelity, and had done all she could to make adjustment through her bishop, and had remarried in what seemed to be a happy marriage. The man, on the other hand, had been most demanding and seemed determined to see that she was disciplined severely. From authority to authority he took the case, rehearsing all her weaknesses and eccentricities, fully embellishing them and demanding that the Church take action.

“. . . Revenge seemed to be his obsession. It was necessary to say to him: ‘You have done your full duty when you have reported the misdeeds to the proper authority. You need not take the matter further.’ And when he persisted, it was finally necessary to tell him that unless he desisted, action might be taken against him. Revenge is sweet to some, but ‘revenge is mine, saith the Lord.’ Again, he that will not forgive is worse than the original culprit.”<sup>1</sup>

### **The Greater Sin**

In Doctrine and Covenants 64:9 the Savior said, “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.” The *greater* sin? How can that be?

Sin is anything we permit into our lives that will destroy us spiritually. When we poison ourselves with vengeful feelings, with hate, we distance ourselves from the influence of the Spirit of the Lord. Not only that, but we attempt to assume one of God’s roles—that of determining who is worthy of forgiveness.

### **How to Forgive**

How does one forgive? Forgiveness begins by putting three things into perspective. First, acknowledge your pain when you have been wronged. You may not be able to control what you initially feel in response to a situation, but you can control how you act upon those feelings. Are you going to allow your pain or anger to fester? The person may have offended you once. But each time you replay the situation you are reviving those feelings. Are you going to let a past experience intrude upon your enjoyment of today?

Second, try to understand the other person’s circumstances. Try to see him or her as a person who makes mistakes, as a person who may hurt other people unknowingly or who may have challenges we can’t understand. Forgiveness encourages us to view a person not as some malevolent creature but as a child of God struggling to cope in a confusing, telestial world. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow said, “If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man’s life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility.”<sup>2</sup>

Third, an attitude of forgiveness helps us focus on the situation instead of the person. We can think, “That remark really embarrassed me,” instead of, “Jim embarrassed me.” Or, “It hurts to have my personal integrity questioned,” instead of, “Jane really hurt me.” I am convinced it is possible to separate our feelings about an individual from our feelings about an incident.

### **Love Is a Decision**

One of my favorite bumper stickers says, “Love is a daily decision.” Love is a daily decision to behave toward others in a way that is helpful to them *in spite of how we may sometimes feel*. When we act in loving ways toward people who have offended us, often our actions will lead us to feel more kindly toward them. We tend to love those we serve. Even if the offenses continue and our feelings do not change, forgiveness requires us to keep responding in a loving manner (see Matthew 5:44–48).

I am not saying we should let people take advantage of us. There are times when our most helpful reaction is to be honest with the individual and say, “That remark hurt



my feelings,” or, “It hurt me when you did this.” In most cases one should follow the Savior’s injunction to discuss the issue privately with the individual (see D&C 42:88; Matthew 18:15). In serious cases a person may need to be dealt with in the civil courts and sometimes in Church disciplinary councils (see D&C 42:89). Having served as a bishop and on a number of high councils, I have found that Church disciplinary councils are councils of love and forgiveness, even when disciplinary action is taken (see D&C 64:12–13).

Most often I try to file away an incident as just another challenging experience without saying anything. Some questions I use in deciding whether to speak are: “Will this help the individual? Without open resolution, will our relationship continue to decay? Am I being fair to the person by not sharing how I feel in this situation?”

One who is forgiving does not seek revenge but may seek to help a person see the social and spiritual consequences of certain actions. To let someone continually offend you without telling him or her is not fair to that person, especially if it has a negative effect on your relationship. For example, to let someone steal from you without any negative

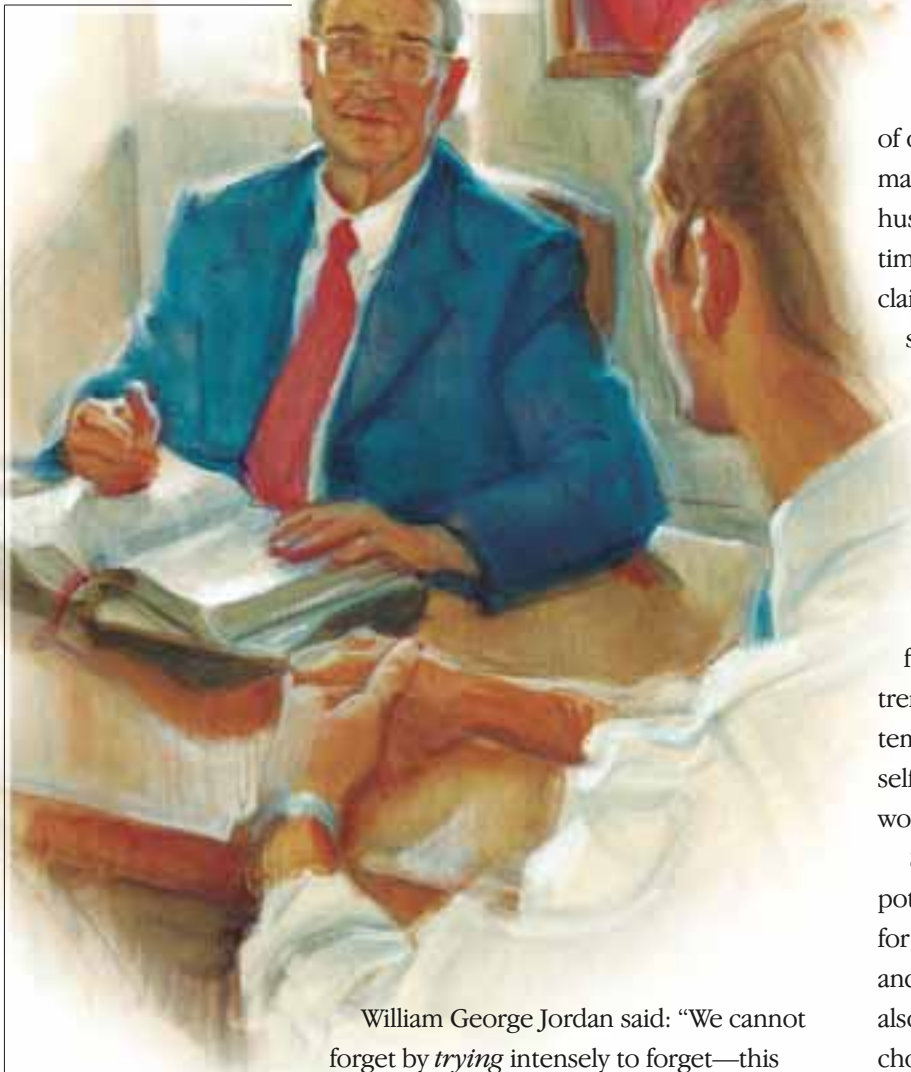
consequences—no matter how much you feel sorry for the person—is just encouraging social and spiritual decay.

#### **Does Forgiving Mean Forgetting?**

Some people say that to completely forgive someone we must forget what transpired. I am not convinced this is possible, short of brain surgery. The forgiving person will remember with sympathy. The offender must suffer the ultimate social and spiritual consequences of his or her behavior. Compassion will help the forgiving person to finally let go of the incident, leave it alone, and with the aid of the Spirit, let days and weeks of life’s other challenges and blessings help it fade into the past.<sup>3</sup>

***I*** *t may not be possible to completely forget the offense. But compassion will help the forgiving person to finally let go of the incident.*





**I**n most cases one should follow the Savior's injunction to discuss the issue privately with the individual who has committed the offense.

William George Jordan said: "We cannot forget by *trying* intensely to forget—this merely deepens and gives new vitality to the memory. True forgetting really means finer memory; it is displacing one memory by another . . . so that the first is weakened, neutralized, and faded out like a well-treated ink stain. . . . Time helps wonderfully."<sup>4</sup>

#### **Forgiveness and Trust**

Forgiveness and trust are not synonymous. We are required to forgive everyone (see D&C 64:10) but counseled to be cautious in placing our trust in others (see Matthew 7:6; Proverbs 25:19). Trust places a responsibility in people that they may not be ready to handle. Trust must be earned. I can forgive a child's stealing my money but still limit access to my wallet until I feel he or she can handle the temptation to steal.

A friend of mine is an excellent example

of one who forgives. She had been married many years and was deeply in love with her husband when she discovered that for some time he had been committing adultery. He claimed to want to repent, and things smoothed over for a few years until it became clear he had no intention of ending his immorality and other evil habits.

Over time more facts concerning his lifestyle came to light, and after much prayer and counseling this woman decided that divorce was best for her and for the children. It was a tremendous struggle. I saw her rise above the temptation to wallow in feelings of anger and self-pity and determine that her feelings would not dictate her actions.

She has come to see her ex-husband as a potentially good, loving man. She feels sorry for him. She has taught her children to love and respect him for his good qualities but also to see the tragic results of his sinful choices. Her energies are not spent in hateful gossip or revenge.

We *are* on trial when others wrong us, but the mercy we offer others will also be extended to us. Jesus Christ said, "Forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25). Often when we forgive others it benefits us far more than the wrongdoer. As we forgive we become more humble, more at peace with ourselves, more receptive to the Spirit of the Lord—indeed, more like Christ. ■

*Steve F. Gilliland is bishop of the El Dorado YSA Ward, Long Beach California East Stake.*

#### **NOTES**

1. *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (1969), 265.
2. As quoted in Thomas A. Harris, *I'm OK—You're OK* (1973), 295.
3. See Boyd K. Packer, "That All May Be Edified" (1982), 63–69.
4. "Forgetting as a Fine Art," *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1970, 81.



# At Home

## with Missionary Work

BY JANE FORSGREN

*The sudden change in Tom Barlow's life led to an unexpected kind of healing and opportunities for missionary work he would never have imagined.*

**D**istractions—that was the major cause of young Tom Barlow's inactivity in the Church. Coming from a strong gospel background, he had the example of his mother, who was baptized in Denmark, and his loving father. As a teenager, Tom wasn't faithless—just easily distracted by the world. After all, he thought a day on the ski slopes was more fun than a day in Church meetings.

One thing led to another, and before long Tom served in the army rather than on a mission and later got a nice apartment in Park City, Utah, close to the mountains he loved. But 5 August 1988 brought an abrupt halt to the distractions of ski slopes and bike trails.

Celebrating his new job as an electronics technician, Tom and a few friends were four-wheeling in Snake Creek

Canyon when their truck slid on a gravel road and rolled three times. The last thing Tom remembers is being thrown from the truck onto a rock.

About two months later, Tom awoke from his comatose state and discovered to his great horror that he could not move or speak. He recalls now, "The nurse handed me an alphabet chart, and I blinked once for no and twice for yes as I answered the questions she posed to me. She told me I had broken my neck. I asked her how long I would be in a cast, thinking it kept my body from moving. She said it wasn't like that—it was permanent. When that realization hit me, I glanced at the ventilator and spelled three words: "Turn it off." "

Fortunately, no one listened.

### **Learning to Breathe**

The next few months saw Tom's mother or father with him at the hospital every minute. Their constant prayers in his behalf were an object lesson of their love for both him and the gospel, and the Lord heard their pleadings. After the first

crucial weeks of merely staying alive, Tom was transferred to the University of Utah spinal cord rehabilitation unit. He had been told he would never get off the ventilator or function without the tracheotomy tube. But his mother expected more—and got it. Bishop Val Finlayson assured Tom in a blessing that the Lord would assist his efforts to breathe on his own, and a few months later Tom went off the ventilator.

Breathing wasn't Tom's only progress. Although a crushed spinal cord was excruciating, Tom recognized the source of an even deeper pain: losing the Spirit of the Lord years earlier.

"At the age of 22, I realized I had never read the Book of Mormon," Tom remembers. "I knew the Lord had given me a second chance, and I became determined to find out His plan for me. My dad bought me a large Book of Mormon, cut off the binding, and put it in a three-ring binder. Assisted by my mother, I read from January to September, and then I decided to take Moroni's challenge. I expected an immediate response, but nothing happened. Finally, after several prayers, my heart began pounding, and I realized that I had known it was true all along."

#### **Called to Serve**

The Spirit of the Lord continued to pour out upon Tom. He regained the ability to speak and soon

received his patriarchal blessing. It contained the words he had been praying for: the Lord would direct him vocationally, and he would be a missionary.

Tom, never questioning that these blessings would be fulfilled, worked strenuously during the next few months to strengthen his body, restoring some movement in his left hand and arm. His efforts paid off. Able to use a computer mouse, he eventually started a small graphics business, and the world opened up.

"When I get in front of a computer, a lot of my disability fades away," observes Tom. At the same time, the gospel opened up to him as never before. He received his temple endowment and prepared himself to become a missionary, believing he would be called when he was able to walk. But the Lord had a different plan for him.

In December 1999 Tom was called as a stake missionary (now ward missionary). A short time later, his mother, Norma, was called as his companion,

**W**hen Tom Barlow awoke from a two-month coma after his accident, a priesthood blessing allowed him to be able to breathe on his own. He turned to the scriptures and gained a burning testimony of the gospel. Now he spends much of his time in the service of the Lord.



## A LIFELONG RESPONSIBILITY



*“How seriously  
have you personally  
taken the  
Lord’s charge to  
share His gospel?  
It is a lifelong*

*responsibility. It is to be addressed  
differently according to the various  
seasons of your life. . . . Seek . . .  
ways to serve that meet your  
present circumstances.”*

**Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Why Every Member a Missionary?” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 35.**

and together they hosted a mini-MTC for new stake missionaries. As the strains of “Called to Serve” (*Hymns*, no. 249) reverberated through their home, mother and son knew they were witnessing a fulfillment of their prayers for Tom to be a missionary.

Tom threw himself into missionary work, finding that his strongest tool was his testimony. Among those touched by his simple, heartfelt words was Victor, a Mandarin-speaking investigator from the Salt Lake University Chinese Ward. At the end of Victor’s fourth discussion, Tom bore testimony about the plan of salvation, eternal life, and the Book of Mormon, and Victor was asked to close the meeting with a prayer. “Victor was kind of taken aback,” remembers Tom. “We exchanged glances, and I gave him a ‘you can do it’ sign. Then he began praying. At one point he paused, so I looked up. He then pleaded with the Lord to help me walk again.” Victor was later baptized.

### A Full-Time Saint

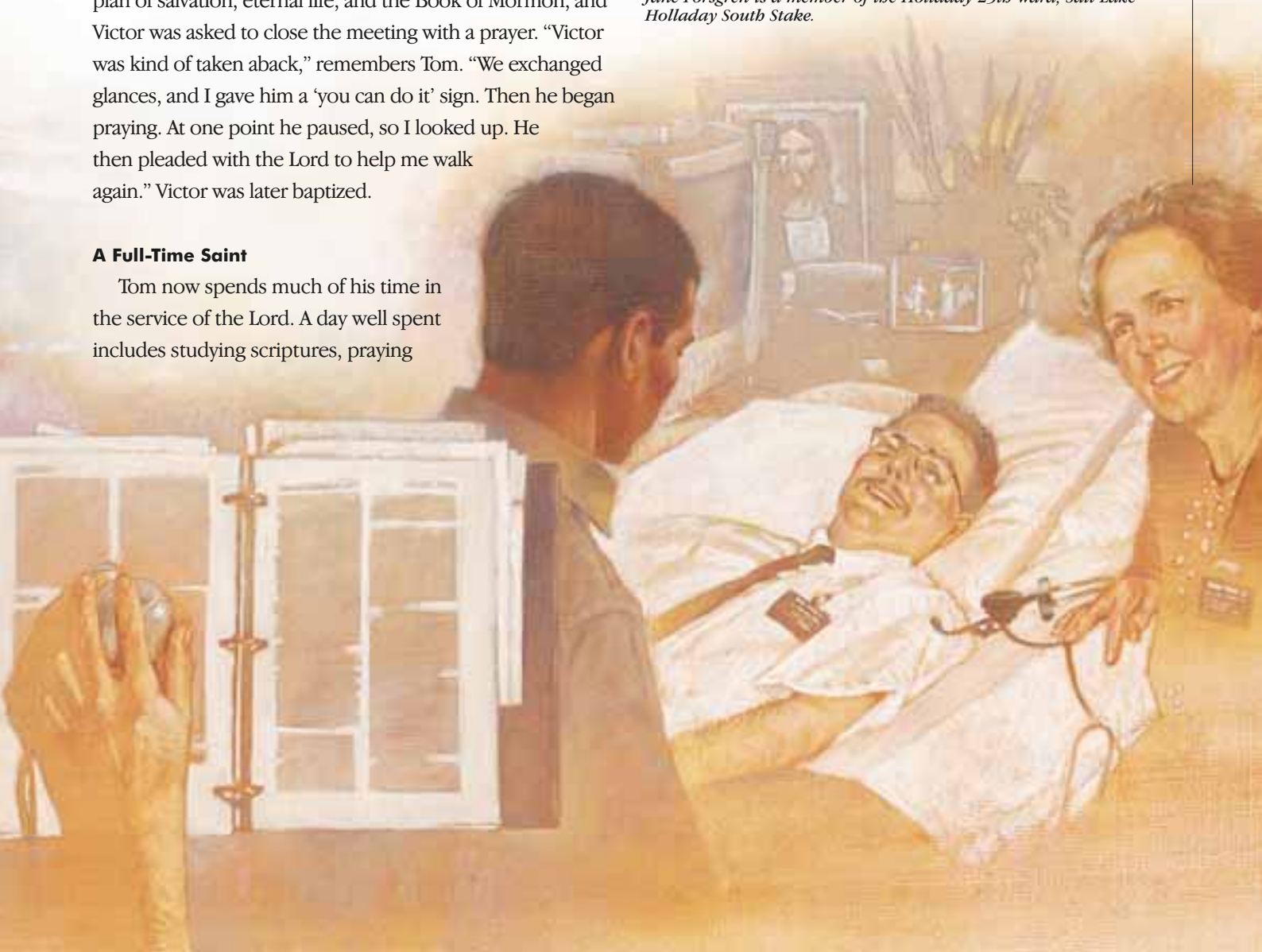
Tom now spends much of his time in the service of the Lord. A day well spent includes studying scriptures, praying

earnestly, preparing the sacrament meeting program he painstakingly designs each week, and working with the full-time missionaries to teach gospel principles to investigators.

Looking back over the unexpected changes and challenges in his life, Tom finds a new significance in those gospel principles he now teaches and studies. “I almost lost my life, but I found my eternal perspective. I know the Lord will help me accomplish every commitment

I made in the premortal life if I will be faithful—and I can do it from a wheelchair or my bed. I know if I do my part, the Lord will do the rest.” ■

*Jane Forsgren is a member of the Holladay 25th Ward, Salt Lake Holladay South Stake.*





# WHEN YOUR CHILD IS DEPRESSED

BY SEAN E. BROTHERRSON

Assistant Professor of Child Development,  
North Dakota State University

*How can parents help their children combat the painful effects of chronic depression?*

**N**ot long ago a friend of mine mentioned he was concerned about his adolescent son's extreme moodiness and despair. And recently a mother in my ward commented that she was not sure what to do about her teenage daughter's feelings of rejection and persistent sadness. Were these isolated instances? Not likely. Contemporary social science research suggests that the

## A LIFELONG RESPONSIBILITY



*"My heart reaches out to our youth, who in many cases must walk a very lonely road. . . .*

*I hope they can share their burden with you, their fathers and mothers. I hope that you will listen, that you will be patient and understanding, that you will draw them to you and comfort and sustain them in their loneliness. Pray for direction. Pray for patience. Pray for the strength to love. . . . Pray for understanding and kindness and, above all, for wisdom and inspiration."*

**President Gordon B. Hinckley, "Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children," Ensign, Nov. 2000, 51.**

incidence of depression in children and adolescents is increasing and that its consequences can be troubling to children and parents alike.

But if "men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25), happiness should not feel forever beyond our reach. In my professional work, I have observed that parents can do much to help a child struggling with depression. And as a Latter-day Saint, I have found that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the source of our greatest peace and joy, and that the Lord provides help for those who earnestly seek Him.

### The Roots of Depression

Childhood and adolescence are marked by emotional ups and downs. President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has noted: "It was meant to be that life would be a challenge. To suffer some anxiety, some depression, some disappointment, even some failure is normal. . . . There is great purpose in our struggle in life."<sup>1</sup> Parents and other adults should be careful, therefore, not to mistake an occasional episode of sadness or discouragement for serious depression. Tears and trouble are part of life too.

Chronic or clinical depression, by contrast, generally refers to a condition that lasts over an extended period of time, usually two weeks or longer, and that interferes with normal functioning. Symptoms may include consistent sadness or irritability, general loss of interest in activities, excessive fatigue or low energy, change in appetite, and social withdrawal.

In determining the best way to address the problem of depression in children and teenagers, it is helpful to understand the factors that may contribute to the condition. These may include:

**Experiential factors.** Difficult life experiences such as the divorce of parents, death of a family member, abuse, or other trauma can result in depression.

**Cognitive factors.** Negative and pessimistic thoughts may cause or prolong depression. A child with the condition may have distorted thinking and may not interpret events realistically.

**Genetic factors.** A history of depression among family members may make some children more likely to experience this condition. Parents should know whether others in their immediate or extended family have had depression.

**Biochemical factors.** Depressive symptoms may occur due to a lack of certain brain chemicals, called

neurotransmitters, that affect an individual's mood and perception. This is often referred to as a chemical imbalance in the brain.

Parents should also understand that when a young person lives contrary to the way he or she has been taught, this can lead to inner conflict and despair (see Moroni 10:22). This can be resolved through repentance. However, it should not be assumed that most cases of clinical depression are caused by unrighteousness.

To understand and identify chronic depression when it occurs is the first step toward making a difference. Parents should be attentive to depressive symptoms in children of any age, but particularly as they grow older, when the condition becomes more common and the consequences more serious. It is important to recognize that chronic depression is a specific illness that often requires intervention just like diabetes or pneumonia. Fortunately, it is highly treatable, and most individuals respond well to a combination of spiritual and social support, medication if necessary, and therapeutic guidance.

### How Parents Can Help

Parents can do much to help prevent depression in children or to help them deal with the condition if they



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE BUNDERSON

already have it. Some ideas include the following:

*Teach children that, as sons and daughters of God, they are of inestimable worth.*

President Gordon B. Hinckley, in counseling young women on self-worth, said: “Know that yours is a divine birthright. . . . Walk with that dignity which is becoming a young woman who is a daughter of God.”<sup>2</sup> Young men should likewise be taught of their divine-heritage and worth.

*Pray for your children, and encourage them to say their own personal prayers.*

Through prayer, children can feel Heavenly Father’s love for them and receive personal revelation for facing their challenges. The beautiful hymn “Sweet Hour of Prayer” reminds us that “in seasons of distress and grief, / [the] soul has often found relief” through the sweetness of prayer.<sup>3</sup> And President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) counseled that prayer is “a key to use

***T****he scriptures are an invaluable source of comfort and hope. Parents can help their children apply scriptural examples to their own experiences.*

in keeping depression from destroying us.”<sup>4</sup>

*Help children learn how to apply lessons from the scriptures to their own lives.*

Children need active guidance from parents to learn how they can apply scriptural examples to their own experiences. Many individuals in the scriptures, while not necessarily experiencing chronic depression, show how to handle difficult feelings or circumstances. Nephi spoke of lingering “in the valley of sorrow” (2 Nephi 4:26); Joseph Smith cried out, “O God, where art thou?” (D&C 121:1); Christ Himself was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3). Parents can help their children see that triumph came for Nephi, the Prophet Joseph Smith, and the Savior as they persevered, refusing to be ruled by negative feelings.

The scriptures are an invaluable source of comfort and hope. One Latter-day Saint who struggled with depression wrote that “the physical, mental, and emotional act of reading the scriptures somehow opened my heart and mind to the possibility of peace.”<sup>5</sup>

*Help children seek counsel from their bishop.* President Packer has said that bishops “have a power to soothe and to sanctify and to heal that others are not given.”<sup>6</sup> A bishop can give inspired direction for dealing with depression and can help a child learn to draw upon the limitless power of the Atonement.

*Foster opportunities for children to master skills that will give them confidence, and encourage them to keep trying.* It is important for children to learn that the way they feel is not independent from the way they live. Children who struggle socially or emotionally tend to become more positive and confident as they learn new skills or master





certain challenges. Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has counseled: “We learn to endure to the end by learning to finish our current responsibilities. . . . We cannot expect to learn endurance in our later years if we have developed the habit of quitting when things get difficult now.”<sup>7</sup>

*Help children develop a positive, proactive view of life.* Children need to be taught how they can replace negative thoughts and feelings with positive ones. President Hinckley has advised strongly “that

each of us turn from the negativism that so permeates our society . . . that optimism replace pessimism, that our faith exceed our fears.”<sup>8</sup>

*Engage children in service.* Meaningful service can be a powerful antidote to feelings of isolation or depression. President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) counseled members who feel gloomy to find others to serve. He said, “The first thing you know, your gloom is gone, you feel light, the Spirit of the Lord is upon you, and everything seems illuminated.”<sup>9</sup> Service to others can also add needed perspective to a young person’s challenges.

**Y**outh experiencing depression often need coaching from their parents on how to address their challenges in positive, healthy ways.





PHOTOGRAPH BY KAH LEONG POON

*Promote a healthy way of life that includes regular exercise, a nutritious diet, sufficient sleep, and social interaction. As youth follow the counsel contained in the Word of Wisdom, they will find other ways of dealing with difficult feelings rather than abusing alcohol or other harmful substances. Additionally, parents should encourage youth to participate in regular exercise and to get sufficient sleep, both of which are necessary for a balanced state of mind. They should also encourage their children to participate in regular social interaction.*

*Help your children understand that they can choose how to respond to life's challenges. Children experiencing depression often need coaching from parents on how to address challenges in positive ways. In particular, parents and other caring adults can help youth learn that agency is granted them so that they may learn "to act for themselves and not to be acted upon" (2 Nephi 2:26).*

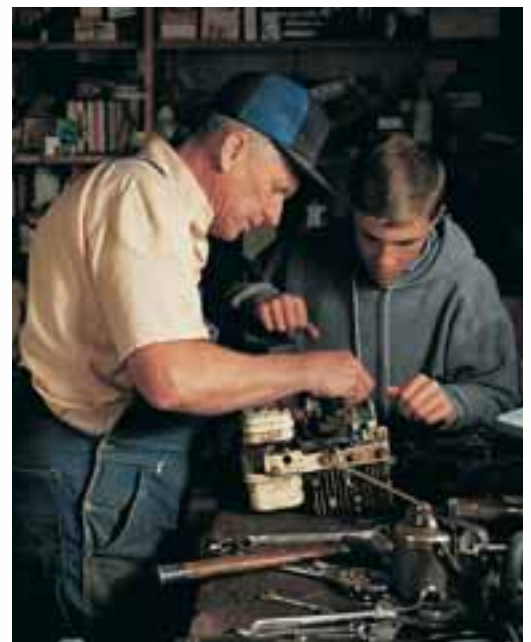
*Seek assistance from qualified medical or clinical personnel if necessary. President Packer has pointed out that "there may be a time when deep-seated emotional problems need more than can be given by the family, the bishop, or the stake president."<sup>10</sup> Children*

**M**eaningful service can be a powerful antidote to feelings of isolation, while learning new skills can help youth become more confident.

who are clinically depressed cannot simply pull themselves out of it by positive thinking. In addition to spiritual counsel from a bishop, overcoming depression may require assistance from competent professionals in the medical or mental health fields. Bishops may refer parents to LDS Family Services, where its services are available, or may recommend other helpful resources. Care is needed in selecting a counselor, since some professionals do not advocate practices consistent with Church teachings.

#### **"Until the Day Dawn"**

Persistent sadness can sap spiritual strength and make a person more vulnerable to Satan's tools of discouragement and despair. Yet the Savior Jesus Christ came into the world to dispel darkness—indeed, He is as "a light that shineth in a dark place" (2 Peter 1:19). As parents work with their children to learn and live by principles of gospel light, and as they use needed resources, their





## SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS AMONG YOUTH

Depression in children and adolescents has been linked with increased risk of suicidal behavior. According to the World Health Organization, suicide is the third leading cause of death in adolescents worldwide, and about 100,000 adolescents take their lives each year. Parents and other adults who are attentive to warning signs can get

youth the help they need when suicide is threatened or attempted. Important warning signs include:

- Ongoing depression or anxiety.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- Conduct problems including impulsive or aggressive behavior.
- Previous suicide attempts.
- Talking or joking about hurting themselves or “not being around.”
- Extreme moodiness or feelings of hopelessness.
- Thoughts about dying.
- Increased isolation or withdrawn behavior.
- Significant sleep and eating changes.
- Noticeable drop in grades or other activities.
- Giving away possessions.
- Death themes in writing, art, or music.
- Increase in arguing or

fighting with parents or peers.

- Exposure to trauma such as child abuse, rape, or death of friends or family members.
  - Experiencing ongoing harassment or bullying.
  - Increased risk-taking with cars or weapons.
  - Getting into trouble repeatedly at school or with the law.
  - A specific suicide plan.
- It is critical for parents and others to take warning signs and suicide threats seriously, to listen to youth and stay close to them, and to immediately refer the child or adolescent to an appropriate medical or mental health resource for assistance if necessary. ■

**P**arents should encourage their children to participate in regular exercise, get enough sleep, and follow a nutritious diet.

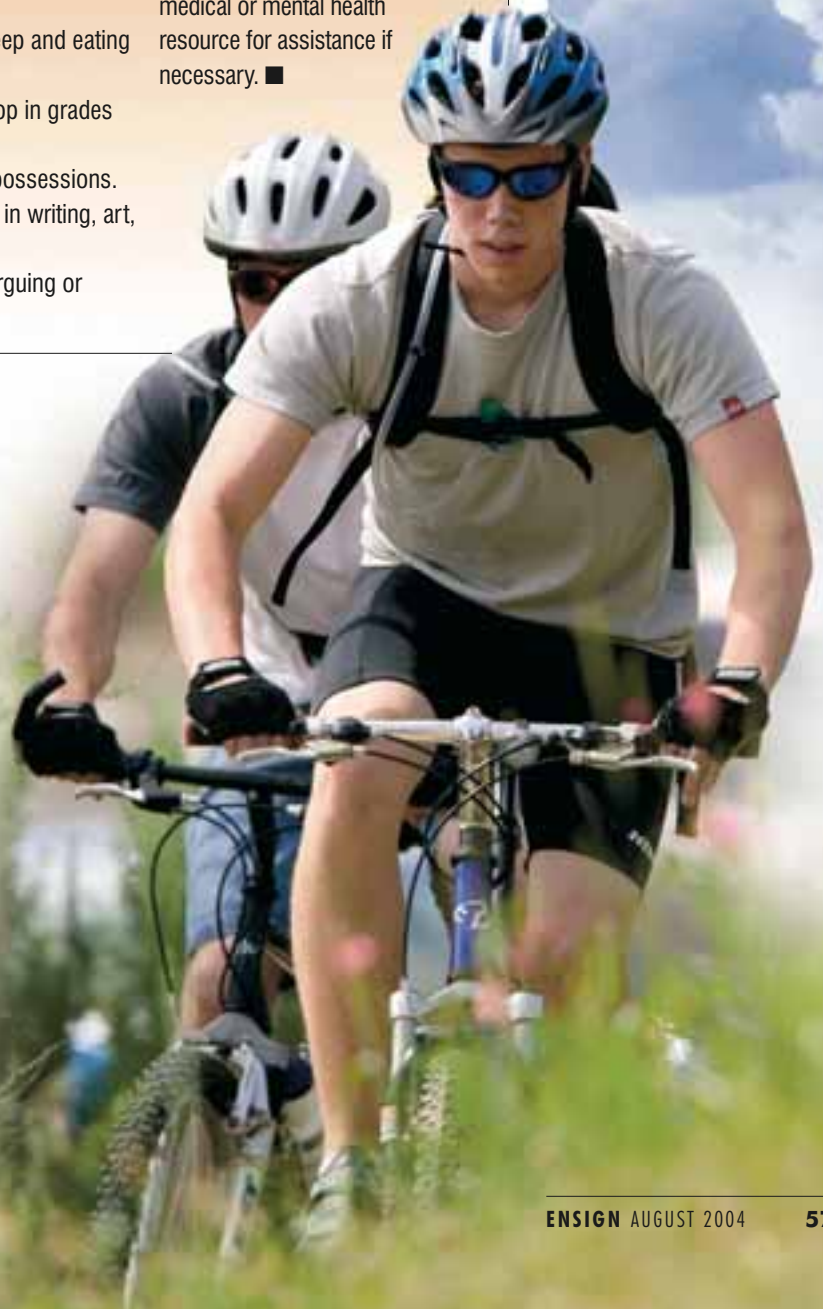
children will be better able to enjoy the joys of the gospel and learn to overcome patterns that may contribute to depression. They then can gradually grow in His light “until the day dawn, and the day star arise in [their] hearts” (2 Peter 1:19). ■

*Sean E. Brotherson is a member of the Fargo Second Ward, Fargo North Dakota Stake.*

### NOTES

1. “Solving Emotional Problems in the Lord’s Own Way,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 93.
2. “Stand True and Faithful,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 92.
3. *Hymns*, no. 142.
4. “Do Not Despair,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1986, 2.
5. G. G. Vandagriff, “Escaping My Valley of Sorrow,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2000, 66.
6. *Ensign*, May 1978, 92.
7. “Behold, We Count Them Happy Which Endure,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 77.
8. “The Continuing Pursuit of Truth,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1986, 4.
9. In Conference Report, Apr. 1899, 2–3.
10. *Ensign*, May 1978, 92.

*More on this topic: Shanna Ghaznavi, “Rising above the Blues,” New Era, Apr. 2002, 30; Jan Underwood Pinborough, “Keeping Mentally Well,” Ensign, Sept. 1990, 48. More information is also available at the Church’s Web site [providentliving.org](http://providentliving.org).*



BY LARRY A. TUCKER

Professor of Lifestyle Medicine, Brigham Young University



# MOVE MORE, STRESS LESS!

**W**e live in stressful times. In addition to the taxing pressures of a fast-paced society and a struggling economy, many of us feel the shadow of terrorism or war lurking in the background of our lives. Unfortunately, when the intensity or frequency of the stress in our lives is excessive, our bodies take a beating: we become like a rubber band stretched to its maximum, ready to snap.

Because we as Latter-day Saints

*Regular exercise offers our minds and bodies a welcome release from the pressures of everyday life.*

understand the sacred nature of the body (see 1 Corinthians 6:19–20), we know how important it is to maintain our mental and physical health. And in order to do this in today's world, we must learn how to manage stress. Gospel practices—such as prayer, fasting, scripture study, service, priesthood blessings, and counseling with Church leaders—can be effective coping methods. Additional techniques include meditation, deep breathing, and exercise.



Regular exercise, which can be useful for anyone at any age or fitness level, is a healthy and highly effective approach to releasing the “rubber band” we have stretched tight in our lives. Exercise does not have to be unpleasant or intense to be useful for stress management. Most adults will find regular brisk walking to be a great tool in helping to soothe a stress-filled life. While 30–60 minutes of walking is optimal, 10–20 minutes can effectively serve as a calming balm. And when the going gets especially difficult, even a short 5–10 minute stroll can bring immediate stress relief.

Following is a list of six stress-reducing benefits of exercise:

1. Exercise can serve as a temporary diversion from our worries; escaping problems for short periods of time can revitalize and refresh us. Going for a bike ride or a walk around the block can afford temporary relief from the sting of stress and invigorate our bodies so we can again face the demands of the day.

2. Exercise strengthens our bodies and increases stamina. Research shows that even a short period of physical activity can lift our spirits, raise our metabolism, and counter feelings of fatigue. Furthermore, once we develop a reasonable level of fitness, we develop energy reserves that will allow us to participate more fully in work and play.

3. Exercise affords time for pondering and meditation. Walking, pedaling a stationary bike, or swimming laps requires little conscious thought. Therefore, exercise time can be used as a break to reflect and plan—valuable ingredients for good decision making and stress management.

4. Physical exertion during the day promotes more restful

sleep at night. Physical activity facilitates the release of tension, promotes muscle relaxation, and allows sleep to occur naturally. Generally, individuals who exercise regularly can relax more completely and sleep more soundly than those who are not active, especially when under stressful conditions.

5. Exercise also tends to improve self-esteem and engender feelings of confidence, which are especially important in times of uncertainty. Since consistent participation in an exercise program takes self-discipline and hard work, faithful exercisers know they have persevered and accomplished something worthwhile. In general, those who exercise have greater confidence in themselves.

6. Finally, regular exercise generates a healthier perspective on life. A study of more than 7,000 adults conducted at Brigham Young University showed that while adults who exercise have the same number of demands and pressures as those who don’t exercise, exercisers perceive significantly fewer problems in their lives. Despite stressful circumstances, exercise brings a more positive outlook.

Exercise is not a cure-all; it will not eliminate stress or solve all of our problems. However, exercise will assist us in facing challenges with greater confidence and stamina. Because exercise so effectively releases tension built up in the body by stress, physical activity is something that should not be pushed aside in day-to-day life. Each of us has a right and a responsibility to take care of the body that the Lord has given us. When it comes to managing stress, maintaining health, and improving quality of life, exercise is well worth the effort. ■

*Larry A. Tucker is a member of the Cascade Fourth Ward, Orem Utah Cascade Stake.*



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# KNOWING MY ETERNAL SELF

BY SHEILA OLSEN

*Our roles keep changing, but our eternal identity remains the same.*

As we grow older, we each seem to notice a particular birthday that makes us realize our vulnerability to time.

For me, it was when I turned 40 and thereby became “the same age” as my mother. You see, in my mind her age had been frozen in time, remaining the same as it was when I married. Facing that 40th birthday, I suddenly realized I must seem as old to my children as my mother had seemed to me then. “But I’m young!” I wanted to explain.

I feel similarly today. Others carry the role of being older. I am still that same young person I was when my mother was 40.

I am, but then again I’m not. In fact, my life is a kaleidoscope of changing roles as I focus and



refocus on an array of diverse concerns and endeavors. Dark spots of trial and sorrow are balanced with bright colors of happiness, hope, and laughter, reflecting a life that is different from day to day and season to season.

Amid these kaleidoscopic changes of life, who am I really?

I glimpsed part of the answer some years ago while attending my 30-year high school class reunion in a distant state after having never been back since my graduation.

It was as if I had gone back in time—back to when my identity was not tied to the lives of 10 children or a husband or a variety of community and Church activities; back to a time and a place when I was not Sheila Olsen but Sheila Sorensen.



With a sense of discovery, I found that my “friends of the heart” of those days, separated as we had been by distance and time for 30 years, were friends of the heart still. In fact, almost as if I were understanding it for the first time, I realized that in addition to being Sheila Olsen, I am also Sheila Sorensen, the girl who recited “Birches” in speech class years ago.

### Seeing My Grandmother Anew

This new perspective helped me better appreciate an experience I had with my grandmother many years ago. At the time she was quite ill, though she later recovered. Anxious to preserve every possible memory, I drove to visit her in the nursing home, taking with me an old photo album with pictures that needed identification.

She was old and thin, more frail than I had ever remembered her, but her mind was still active. In a faint voice she identified a girl in one picture as someone who had dated my grandfather before my grandmother met him. As we talked, her voice became increasingly weaker, and I could hear her only by putting my ear close to her lips as she haltingly spoke.

“Yes,” she whispered, remembering those years

of courtship, and suddenly, as 74 years were transformed into yesterday, I saw in her eyes a 17-year-old girl. The sparkle in her eyes belied the weakness in her voice: “*She* wanted him . . . but *I* got him!”

Who was my grandmother anyway? If you had met her then, you would have seen the white-haired resident of a nursing home who filled the tiny space surrounding her bed with pictures, flowers, and books, reflecting her vibrant personality.

But what of young Dollie Copen growing up in the West Virginia hills, joining her family on the veranda of a summer evening to talk and sing . . . or the beautiful young woman with black hair down to her waist, courted by Frank Sorensen of Mendon, Utah,

**M**y life is different from day to day and season to season. Amid these kaleidoscopic changes, who am I really?

... or the hardy farmer's wife, toiling at his side to homestead the wilds of southern Idaho, turning out eight loaves of bread at a time from her coal-fired Monarch range and doing laundry on a washboard ... or the Relief Society president remembering, in her 70s, to care for the "old folks" on her block (in their 80s)?

Just as surely as I am Sheila Sorensen from the high school speech class, she was Dollie Copen, the carefree young girl, as well as Dollie Sorensen, the busy young wife. And she, no doubt, was as bemused to be 91 as I was to turn 40.

### Echoes from Eternity

In each of our lives we carry with us a variety of roles, reaching back into time—perhaps even further back into time than the limits of our mortal experiences enable us to see.

I have often felt, when entering the temple, a sense of "coming home"—a reunion, as it were, with the divine.

Could it be because beyond the kaleidoscope of roles which form the sum of our existence in this life, there are other facets to our person that harken back to eternity?

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old," says scripture. "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was" (Proverbs 8:22–23).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote of the premortal existence: "All the spirits of men, while yet in the Eternal Presence, developed aptitudes, talents, capacities, and abilities of every sort, kind, and degree. During the long expanse of life

## YOUR WORTH AS AN INDIVIDUAL



*"All of you need to drink in deeply the gospel truths about the eternal nature of your individual identity and the uniqueness of your personality. You need, more and more, to feel the perfect love which our Father in Heaven has for you and to sense the value he places upon you as an individual. Ponder upon these great truths, especially in those moments when (in the stillness of such anxiety as you may experience as an individual) you might otherwise wonder and be perplexed."*

**President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), "The Role of Righteous Women," *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 103.**



which then was, an infinite variety of talents and abilities came into being. As the ages rolled, no two spirits remained alike. Mozart became a musician; Einstein centered his interest in mathematics; Michelangelo turned his attention to painting. Cain was a liar, a schemer, a rebel. ... Mary and Eve were two of the greatest of all the spirit daughters of the Father. ... And so it went through all the hosts of heaven, each individual developing such talents and abilities as his soul desired."<sup>1</sup>

### Learning from Our Master

While we were yet developing, one being, Jesus Christ, progressed above all others. If there are two spirits, "one being more intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intelligent than they; I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all" (Abraham 3:19).

What did the Lord do with the great abilities, experience, and intel-

ligence that He possessed in such superior measure? The answer has immeasurable impact on each of our lives, and it gives sobering insight into the focus we should have:

"I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

"And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me. ...

"Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:13–14, 27).

Who, then, am I really?

A clue was there, at my class reunion.



Before I was Sheila Olsen, I was Sheila Sorensen, and I still am. But before I was Sheila Sorensen, I was a daughter of God, and I still am.

And my loving Father has sent His Son to mark the path and lead the way and every point define.<sup>2</sup> At times I may wander off that path, but through repentance and a changed heart I can cast off the weaknesses that impede my progress and can resume my journey with faith.

And the ever-changing challenges of my life can work together for my good as I focus on the Lord's plan for my salvation.

As with us all. ■

*Sheila Olsen is a member of the Woodruff First Ward, Idaho Falls Idaho Ammon West Stake.*

**NOTES**

1. *The Mortal Messiah*, 4 vols. (1979–81), 1:23.
2. See "How Great the Wisdom and the Love," *Hymns*, no. 195.



**R**egardless of our changing roles and seasons, we remain sons and daughters of God.



# They Think They Are Wise



BY ELDER RICHARD D. MAY

Area Authority Seventy  
North America Southeast Area

Not long ago, I asked several members of my family to identify some of the best sermons found in the scriptures—sermons that contained important doctrines, principles, and teachings. Our discussions generated a list that, while not comprehensive, has served as my recent focus for studying the scriptures. One of these great discourses was Jacob’s speech to the Nephites recorded in 2 Nephi 6–10. Among the passages that impressed me as I studied Jacob’s words was his rebuke of those who were learned, rich, and proud. He made the comment: “When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish” (2 Nephi 9:28).

For years I have had this verse marked in my scriptures. At times I have wondered what this meant for me personally. Was learning

bad? Was it wrong to pursue an advanced education? What did Jacob mean when he said “their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not”? Certainly, we get a major clue from the next verse, which reads, “But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God” (2 Nephi 9:29).

### My Father’s Example

As I was growing up in southern California, my father always encouraged me to do well in school and get the best education I could. He was a good example to me, too, as I frequently found him reading a good book in the evening and expanding his mind on various subjects. Prior to our annual vacations, he would read up on places of interest. He would then educate us about them en route, as well as taking us to these places. Once, on a trip to the eastern United States, I thought he must have been an authority on the Revolutionary War. On another trip, we stopped at a glass factory. I thought he must have *invented* glass. Not until I was much older did I learn that he had never graduated from high school, as his father needed his help

**Among the passages that impressed me as I studied Jacob’s speech to the Nephites was his rebuke of those who were learned, rich, and proud.**



on the family farm that last year and beyond, which prevented him from completing the 12th grade.

Not long after I completed my mission, my father suddenly passed away. Remembering his admonition to get a good education, I continued to pursue my college education. My family and my wife's family wondered if I would *ever* finish, for after graduating with a bachelor's degree and getting married, I proceeded to earn a master's degree, then a Ph.D. in immunology, followed by additional post-doctoral training. During these years, I frequently read and pondered Jacob's words: "But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God" (2 Nephi 9:29). Was I hearkening to the Lord's counsels? I at least *hoped* I was. I am grateful for the support of a wife who kindly helped me keep gospel goals in perspective.

#### **The Word of Wisdom and the Wisdom of Man**

Along my path I have met some who seemed to be following Jacob's teachings on this point and others who were not. One principle the learned sometimes struggle with is the Word of Wisdom. A former bishop recently shared with me part of a conversation he had years ago with a successful physician. This man had been moderately active in the Church but attended his meetings only rarely after he began his medical practice. When the bishop invited him for an interview, the doctor told him, "Bishop, I can never be successful in my career and live the Word of Wisdom. I need to drink socially in order to climb the ladder of success." As a consequence, none of his family is now active in the gospel. Is this success?

In certain professional circles I have seen how this commandment can be a stumbling block for some, but it has never really been a challenge for me and I have felt blessed in this regard.

Another common aspect of higher learning that has caused some to stumble is the theory of evolution. Some have felt they could not reconcile geological or biological evidence with the little we know about the Creation from the scriptures and the teachings of our modern prophets. I recall having had some of these questions in my early 20s. However, I distinctly recall an experience in a biochemistry class during my first year of graduate school. During a



weekday lecture about the enzymatic steps involved in glycolysis (the breakdown of glucose to lactic acid), an overwhelming sense of peace came upon me with an impression from the Spirit that someday I would understand how our world came to be. The beauty and perfection of how living things operate left me little doubt of the divine origin of life. Everything I learned that semester strengthened my testimony of how beautiful (and complex) life is and how divine the Creation had to be. I have been satisfied since then that the dozens of questions I continue to have will someday be answered when I pass from this life and no longer “see through a glass, darkly” (1 Corinthians 13:12). Until then, I am content to walk by faith so that the plethora of interesting and fascinating data does not cause me to doubt my faith or think I am “learned” and “wise” and need not “hearken unto the counsels of God.”

**Excelling at Other Pursuits**

Are there other pursuits or talents that could be applied to Jacob’s statement “When they are learned they think they are wise. . . . But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God” (2 Nephi 9:28–29)? What about a musical or athletic talent? What about a hobby, a business pursuit, or some other interest? While all these things can be good, if we carry them to an extreme, to the exclusion of the things of God, we can get our lives out of balance and even lose the guidance of the Lord’s Spirit.

This is probably one reason Jesus taught, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). What happens to us when we spend the majority of our

**L**iving the gospel brings balance, joy, and fulfillment. It is good to be accomplished in anything worthwhile—provided we hearken first to the counsels of God.

time and energy playing or listening to music, practicing or playing a sport, gardening, or working too many hours at our jobs, and thus neglect the things of God? We may find we have crowded our lives with too many good things and not left sufficient time for weightier matters: personal and family prayer morning and night, daily personal and family scripture study, weekly family

home evening, regular church attendance, Christian service to others, and regular temple worship. Without realizing it, we move farther and farther from the Lord and become unbalanced in our lives. If we are not careful, we can fall into a situation similar to that of the Nephites in Helaman’s or Mormon’s time when “they had become weak, like unto their brethren, the Lamanites, and . . . the Spirit of the Lord did no more preserve them” (Helaman 4:24; see also Mormon 2:26).

**Balance, Joy, and Fulfillment**

I am grateful for my father’s encouragement to get a good education; it has permitted me to pursue a satisfying career and also to serve others. The more I have learned about science, the more I have realized how little I know and how much there is to learn about how the immune system and other systems of the body operate and how glorious indeed God’s creations are. I am also grateful for the Lord’s teachings through the scriptures, His living prophets and apostles, and the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. And I am thankful for how living the gospel brings balance, joy, and fulfillment to our lives. Not only is it good to be learned if we hearken to the counsels of God; it is good to be accomplished in *anything* worthwhile—provided we hearken first to the counsels of God. ■

## Feeling the Love of the Lord through Self-Mastery

**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.

**Revelation 3:21:** “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

**President Gordon B. Hinckley:** “When a man is motivated by great and powerful convictions of truth, then he disciplines himself . . . because of the knowledge within his heart that God lives; that he is a child of God with an eternal and limitless potential” (“The True Strength of the Church,” *Ensign*, July 1973, 49).

**Alma 37:33:** “Teach them to withstand every temptation . . . , with their faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

**President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95):** “When we have . . . an eternal perspective, we can more clearly evaluate what will bring us the greatest happiness in life. We should decide now, in the light of the morning, how we will act when the darkness of night and when the storms of temptation arrive” (“Commitment to God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 58).

**Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:**

“Not an age in life passes without temptation, trial, or torment experienced through your physical body. But as you prayerfully develop self-mastery, desires of the flesh may be subdued” (“Self-Mastery,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 32).

**Alma 38:12:** “Bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love.”

**President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency:** “When . . . sin, disappointment, failure, and weakness make us less than we should ever be, there can come the healing salve of the unreserved love in the grace of God. It is a love . . . that lifts and blesses. It is a love that sustains a new beginning” (“A Personal Relationship with the Savior,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 59).

**Kathleen H. Hughes, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency:** “A woman I know was struggling with anger toward someone who had hurt her and her family. Though she told her children not to become embittered and resentful, she fought those feelings herself. After weeks of entreating her Father in Heaven, she finally felt a change. She related: ‘One day, in the midst of my nearly constant prayers, the healing came. I felt a



physical sensation spread through my body. After, I felt a sense of security and peace. I knew that

regardless of what happened, my family and I would be all right. The anger left me and so did my desire for retaliation” (“Blessed by Living Water,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2003, 13).

**President David O. McKay (1873–1970):** “It is glorious when you can lie down at night with a clear conscience, knowing you have done your best not to offend anyone and have injured no man. You have tried to cleanse your heart of all unrighteousness, and if you put forth precious effort, you can sense as you pray . . . that he accepts your effort. You have a sense that you are God’s child. . . . You have the strength, the sense of resistance to evil” (*Gospel Ideals* [1954], 502).

**Philippians 4:13:** “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

• *How does drawing closer to the Savior help you master your thoughts, words, and deeds?*

• *What scriptures or teachings of latter-day prophets have helped you gain self-mastery? What have you been able to change or improve? ■*

## *Drifting to Starboard*

By Archie D. Smith

**O**ne evening after the United States Navy destroyer on which I served left Pearl Harbor for the North Pacific, I was the officer of the watch for the night shift. I retired to my bunk after supper to get some sleep before going on duty. I felt the roll of the

ship as I was dropping off to sleep. Later when I relieved the watch, the roll was more pronounced, and as I stepped out into the blackness of the open bridge, I felt the bite of the wind.


During the winter the North Pacific can be quite rough, and that

night the waves were large enough that the wind was starting to catch their crests and cause a white streaking of foam.

“I am ready to relieve you, sir,” I said.

The officer on duty’s face reflected the soft glow of the compass, and he reported the ship’s course and speed. He added that the captain had turned in for the evening, then said, “The barometer has dropped

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. MCKAY

An illustration of a sailor in a brown uniform and cap standing on the deck of a ship. The sailor is looking towards the right, with his hand near his head. The sea is turbulent with large, white-capped waves crashing against the ship's hull. The sky is dark and stormy, with rain or spray falling. The overall mood is one of a harsh, dangerous maritime environment.

**F**ear rose inside me because I knew if one of these waves bit us broadside, the ship could capsize.

three-hundredths in the past hour.” This meant stormy weather.

“Does the captain know this?” I asked.

“Yes, but he did not leave any special orders.”

He closed the door to the pilot-house behind him, and I found myself alone looking out at a menacing sea.

When ships encounter heavy weather, officers are to keep the ship’s bow heading into the wind with just enough speed to maintain steering. If waves strike the ship broadside, heavy rolling occurs, which can cause injury to the crew or even capsize the ship.

After an hour the waves had become mountainous. The wind was howling, and sheets of water were being blown through the air from huge cresting waves. The ship would climb the front side of the approaching wave, reach the crest, hang momentarily, then glide swiftly down the back side of the wave, plunging into the trough and resurfacing with water running over the deck, all the while pitching and shuddering. To steady the ship I had to reduce speed.

As the storm increased, I learned that the barometer had dropped another five-hundredths. I called the captain to report the worsening conditions. He simply replied, “Very well,” and hung up.

Soon the helmsman called out to me, “I am having trouble, sir. She is falling off to starboard!” I quickly

checked the compass and discovered that the bow was inching toward the trough. If that continued, we could end up in a dangerous position broadside to the waves. I ordered the helmsman to make the necessary adjustment, but before long the needle started drifting back. The helmsman tried to correct the drift again, but the ship was slow to respond.

Conditions were worsening. The wind was now shrieking at about 100 miles (160 km) per hour, the waves were 50 feet (15 m) high, and the ship’s bow kept moving toward the trough. Fear rose inside me because I knew if one of these waves hit us broadside, the ship could quite possibly capsize. I called the captain, who was awake because the violent motion of the ship made it impossible to sleep. He was worried too. He did not have any advice but told me to do the best I could.

The helmsman informed me with a frightened voice that he had done all he could, but the bow was still drifting to starboard. I was utterly desperate and fear was turning to panic as I continued my frantic mental search for a solution. The most nightmarish thoughts flooded my mind. I felt helpless and entirely humbled.

In my childlike state, I cried out to the only one who could help me—my Heavenly Father. The answer to my impassioned plea was immediate and clear. A voice in my mind said, “Use your engines. Use your engines in opposition.” I instantly understood.

I ordered, “Starboard engine ahead two-thirds. Port engine ahead one-third.” Slowly the ship’s bow responded by moving out of the impending trough. As the ship headed back into the waves, a great feeling of gratitude engulfed me. The storm continued, but I was able to maintain the ship’s direction by adding to one engine and subtracting from the other.

A skeptic might say the solution was in my mind all the time, but I know better. It came in answer to prayer. ■

*Archie D. Smith is a member of the Edgemont Fourth Ward, Provo Utah Edgemont Stake.*

## Overcoming the Pain Made Us Better

By Washington Zambrano

**W**e will never forget the Sunday when a new family of German origin moved into the Pusuqui Branch in Quito, Ecuador. The branch president introduced the Fuchs family during sacrament meeting, and we immediately felt they were special people.

After sacrament meeting I took my family to welcome them. Andreas, the oldest of their children, greeted us warmly and introduced himself as Andy. Something about that moment signaled the beginning of a friendship

that was to be deep, true, and certainly eternal—a friendship that left us an unforgettable legacy.

Time passed, and the Fuchs family became very involved in our branch. I was Young Men president at the time, and I soon saw that Andy's enthusiasm showed in all areas. When we began a service project, he was first to appear—with a big smile.

Andy was an extraordinary person, due to the goodness of our Heavenly Father and the guidance of his earthly parents. From an early age, Andy had been nourished by their affection and patience. He and his father, Horst, shared many activities and were indispensable to each other. This example so matured Andy that at age 14 he was a person of ability and usefulness. His many abilities never ceased to surprise us, but he was humble about them. He was totally dedicated to learning the gospel of Jesus Christ and lost no opportunity to talk to people about the Church.

No one supposed Andy would leave us so soon. We still remember that painful Saturday when we learned of his tragic death.

That morning Andy decided to ride his bike to the top of a hill in the area. He had already done so once with his father and was determined to repeat the feat alone. After getting his father's permission, he set out. As he rode up the hill, a truck transporting wood down the hill careened wildly. It struck Andy and killed him instantly. It was difficult for us to accept that this tragedy had

occurred to such a bright, promising young man.

The truck driver was seriously injured. He was taken to a hospital in Quito under police watch so he would not escape justice for what he had done. Surely, we thought, he should be held accountable for the accident. But from Horst Fuchs we all learned to forgive.

The branch president and I went with Brother Fuchs to identify Andy's body. While the death of his son was very painful, he forgave the person who had taken Andy's life. He refused to hold animosity in his heart. A few days later he visited the truck driver in the hospital and told him that he forgave him. He offered his help and spoke to him about the gospel of Jesus Christ. While the truck driver was recovering at home, he started receiving the discussions from the missionaries, who were accompanied by Brother Fuchs. Brother Fuchs also intervened in the justice system to have all charges against the man dropped.

I know this demonstration of love has its foundation in the gospel of Jesus Christ—the gospel by which the Fuchs family lives. The Fuchs family is indeed exceptional. Their example showed us that only through Christ does great strength come, as well as comfort and support.

Overcoming the pain made us better people. Although we understood that there would be tears along our path through life, our branch saw from Andy's legacy and his father's

example that we must have faith and work diligently to live and share the gospel every day. And because of Jesus Christ, we have faith that we will meet Andy again. ■

*Washington Zambrano is a member of the San Juan Ward, Quito Ecuador Santa Ana Stake.*

## *Just the Help I Needed*

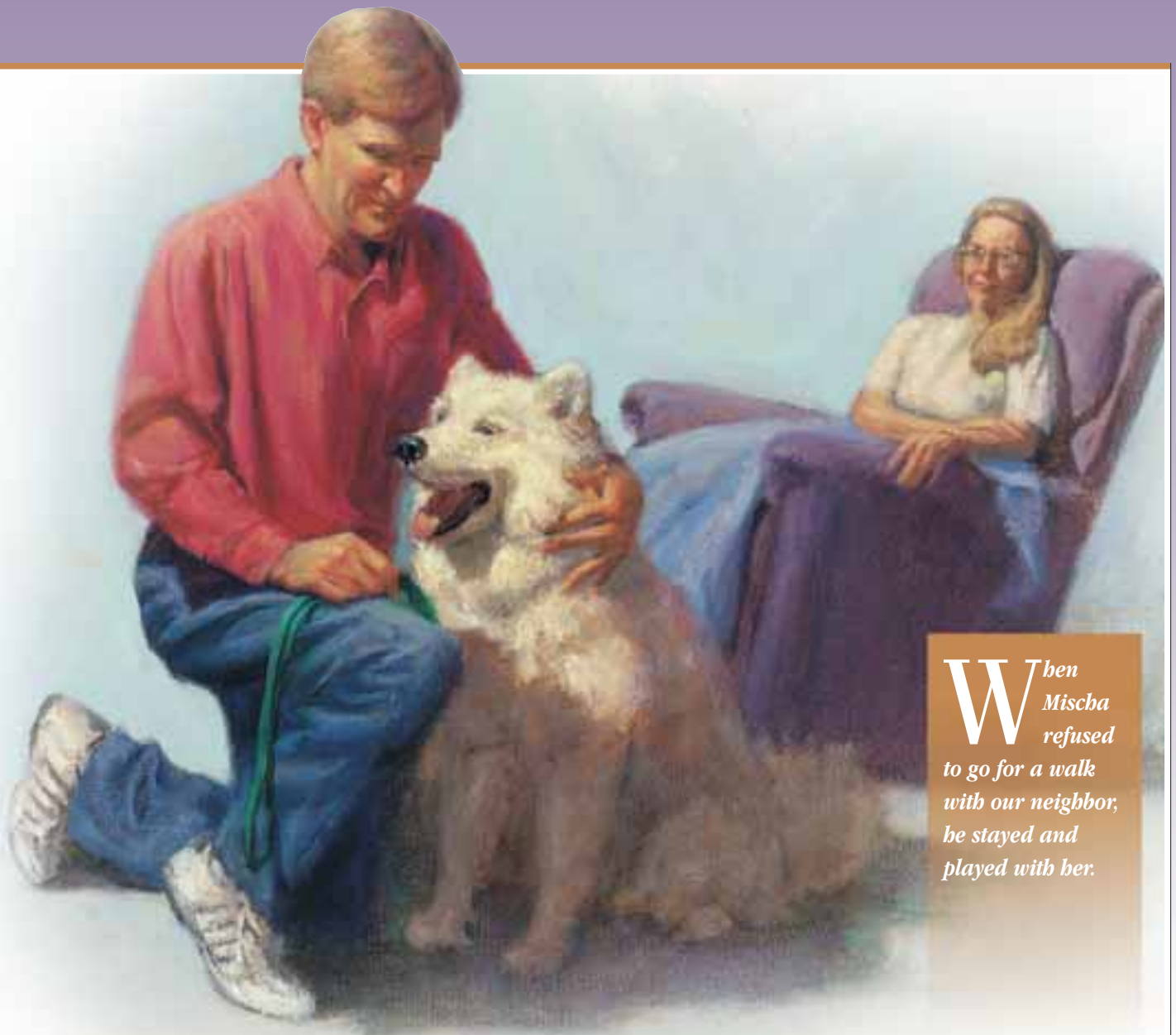
By Margaret Kay Christensen

**A**n act of service on the part of my neighbors taught me a memorable lesson on the importance of identifying others' needs and helping to meet them.

As a single mother of three children, I had learned to be rather self-reliant in caring for my family. However, in the spring of 1989, changes in my circumstances brought new challenges. My older son, a returned missionary, was married and serving far away as a United States Navy officer. My daughter and younger son were preparing to leave within two weeks of each other for missionary service. For the first time, I would be alone.

Well, I would not be *completely* alone—there was Mischa, our large, beautiful Samoyed dog. One of the children took her for a walk every day, but now that they would all be gone, this task would become mine. The problem was, I was scheduled to undergo surgery for bone spurs in my





**W**<sup>hen</sup>  
Mischa  
refused  
to go for a walk  
with our neighbor,  
he stayed and  
played with her.

heel, and walking would be extremely painful for at least several weeks.

During one of the last walks my younger son took with Mischa before leaving for the Missionary Training Center, he was stopped by our neighbor. The man said he would walk our dog every day until one of the children returned home.

The first evening our neighbor came to walk Mischa, she would not go with him because he was a stranger. So he stayed and just played with her for about 15 minutes. He came the next night to play with her and make friends, but she still refused to go for

a walk. Finally on the third night, she was willing to go, and soon she was waiting impatiently for her new friend each night.

Long after my foot had healed from the surgery and I could have taken over the responsibility, my neighbor continued to walk Mischa. When a night job kept him busy three nights a week, his wife took over. For a year and a half until my daughter returned, these wonderful neighbors walked my dog for at least one hour every night except for three nights when they apologetically took a brief vacation out of town. That totaled

more than 547 hours of service!

I am convinced my neighbors were in touch with the Spirit, and I am grateful they identified my need and responded to it. It was not something I would have asked them to do. But given my responsibilities at that time, no other service would have been of greater help to me. Following Alma's admonition "to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light" (Mosiah 18:8), these neighbors set an example of loving service that will always remain with me. ■

*Margaret Kay Christensen is a member of the Midvale Fifth Ward, Midvale Utah Stake.*

## In Charge of Your Charge Card

Weighted down by the struggles of being a divorced parent, I turned to credit cards to handle some of my money problems. But my debt had become a significant burden by the time I could

earn a teaching degree and start a stable career. Unable to progress financially with that burden, I finally decided to follow Church leaders' counsel to get out of debt and stay out. More than 20 years later, I still enjoy a debt-free life. Though individual circumstances vary, many of us have the means to pull ourselves out of the debt trap. Following are two practical ideas that helped free me from credit card debt:

**1. Toss the temptation.** I cut up and threw away all my credit cards except the one with the lowest interest rate. I stored it in my bank safe deposit box for emergency use only.

**2. Plan your payments.** Next I reviewed my monthly budget to determine how much money I had available to pay off debts after my necessary expenses were covered. Then I determined the various interest rates and amounts owed per card. I paid the most I could afford on the card with the highest interest rate and the highest debt first, paying the minimum monthly balance on the others. Once I paid off the first card, I concentrated on the next-highest debt, continuing the strategy until all were paid. At times I felt discouraged, but I made a chart to track my progress. Others may find it best to consolidate all credit card debt to one low interest rate. Whatever plan you choose, persevere until you accomplish your goal. In my case, it took about 18 months.

Being in debt once kept me from fully enjoying my life with my children. However, with the help of the Lord, we exercised the self-discipline, faith, and patience necessary to achieve our goals. The results have netted years of increased financial security and peace of mind—blessings that have more than compensated for anything we could have purchased with a credit card.

*Jackie Vineis, Peavine Mountain Ward, Reno Nevada North Stake*





**Two Favorite Family Home Evenings**

Some 25 years ago, several Latter-day Saint families invited my husband and me, along with our infant daughter, to share a family home evening. Not yet members of the Church, we loved what we saw, heard, and felt that evening. When we were baptized, we couldn't wait to start our own family home evenings! Six children and two grandchildren later, we continue our Monday-night observance.

We have a strong conviction of the importance of family night. What other ideas have helped us to faithfully hold family home evening? A couple of our family's favorite traditions stand out:

**Our "picture plan."** When our children were too little to read and

write, I helped them make family home evening "picture plans." As each child had a turn to conduct, we created a simple chart with hand-drawn pictures or symbols representing the assignments for the song, prayer, lesson, activity, and refreshments. Our little planners were so pleased with their efforts and made sure everyone saw their carefully prepared schedule posted prominently on our refrigerator. When it came time to begin, the little one in charge had rehearsed the plan so many times throughout the day that he or she could conduct the entire evening.

**Our missionary culture night.** While our son was serving a mission in Russia, we periodically held family "Russian night." Borrowing materials from the local library, we reviewed articles, pictures, music, and maps of the country. We also enjoyed trying recipes of authentic foods. Though our son was far away, we experienced a small part of his mission and culture on Monday night with our family at home.

Little did we know so many years ago how an invitation to family home evening would be the start of blessings we continue to enjoy today. We have shared many happy evenings together—many more than we can list. From firsthand experience, we know that holding regular family home evenings is key to a family's success.

*Jill Malczyk,  
Utica Ward,  
Utica New  
York Stake*



*Be Wise,  
Memorize*

**D**uring my service in Primary, I endeavored to help children memorize the Articles of Faith. This experience prompted me to look for ways that could help my children memorize the Articles of Faith at home. The following are some ideas my husband and I used to help our family memorize the Articles of Faith as well as the Ten Commandments.

First, we decided to recite an article of faith before family prayer each morning. We rotated the order daily and used a word clue to remind us of the content of the article of faith for that day: (1) Godhead, (2) Adam, (3) Atonement, (4) principles, (5) laying on of hands, (6) organization, (7) gifts, (8) Bible, (9) revealed, (10) ten tribes, (11) we claim, (12) subject to kings, and (13) honest, true.

Then we decided to add the Ten Commandments in rotation with the Articles of Faith each morning. It takes us 23 days to review all the Articles of Faith and the Ten Commandments, and then we start over. After we have finished memorizing them, we discuss the meaning of each. Some families may want to learn scripture mastery passages to help children prepare for seminary or missionary service.

We have been surprised at how these morning experiences have helped our children remember sacred truths. Recently, our home teachers asked if we knew the thirteenth article of faith. To their surprise we all rang out each word

without hesitation. Now that we have incorporated this into our morning devotional, we don't allow ourselves to part without repeating at least one each day.

*Alice Miller, Fishers Landing Ward,  
Vancouver Washington East Stake*

## President Hinckley Dedicates Temple, Meets with Members Around Europe

During a 10-day trip to Europe, President Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated the new Copenhagen Denmark Temple, addressed the Saints in the British Isles, spoke to members in Paris, France, and presided at a regional conference in Madrid, Spain.

### Denmark

On a sunny morning, 23 May 2004, more than 3,400 members participated in person or via satellite as President Hinckley dedicated the Copenhagen Denmark Temple in four sessions.

In the dedicatory prayer, President Hinckley remembered the early members who left Denmark more than 150 years ago to join the Saints in Zion. “Now Thy people are urged to remain and build Zion in this good land. That they might have every blessing, and that they might extend these blessings to those beyond the veil of death, this beautiful temple has been constructed in their midst.”

During the dedication, President Hinckley spoke of the void in his life following the recent passing of his wife, Marjorie, and of the value of his testimony regarding eternal life together with loved ones. “Death is not the end. . . . We are all on the road towards immortality and eternal life. Let us use the



**President Gordon B. Hinckley speaks to the Saints in England.**

temple as an important part of the preparation.”

The temple, which will serve members in Denmark, Iceland, and parts of Sweden, is housed in a building formerly known as the Priorvej Chapel, originally dedicated by Elder John A. Widtsoe in 1931. Present at the dedication of the temple was Knud Hentzen, a member who had also been present at the chapel dedication almost 73 years earlier. A new meeting-house adjacent to the temple grounds was also recently completed.

President Hinckley met with members the day before the dedication for a devotional and a cultural festival that featured song, music, and dance from Denmark, Sweden, and Iceland.

### England

On 25 May, President Hinckley spoke by satellite to members assembled in stake centers throughout the British Isles, returning to the

land where he served as a missionary more than 70 years ago.

After reminiscing about his earlier days as a missionary, he told members, “How blessed we are to come forth in this great day. We have a responsibility to stand up for the gospel of Christ in this great land.”

He challenged members to gain testimonies of the principles of the gospel by living them. “Do you have any doubts about the benefits of holding family home evenings? . . . When families are falling apart all around us, you can’t afford not to have [family home evening]. Try it, please, and into your hearts will come a conviction that it is true.”

The next day, President Hinckley received the deed

to the Gadfield Elm Chapel, a building in Worcestershire that had originally been given to the Church in 1840 when the entire United Brethren congregation there joined the Church. At one time, the building was the only Latter-day Saint chapel in the world.

### France

President Hinckley met with members in France on 28 May. He told the Saints, “I wish I could announce that we could have a temple here, but we do not have a suitable place yet, in my judgment, to build it. . . . I don’t know when it will be built, but I am confident that . . . sometime in the future a beautiful house of the Lord will grace this land.”

He testified that Christ’s doctrine could be proved true by living it. “I plead with you, my brothers and sisters, if you have any doubt



**Members enjoy the Copenhagen Denmark Temple grounds after the temple’s dedication.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY JØRGEN O. NIELSEN

concerning any doctrine of this Church, that you put it to the test," he said.

### Spain

Before returning home, the prophet traveled to Spain, where he addressed nearly 8,000 members from Spain and Portugal. After testifying that we are all brothers and sisters, children of an Eternal Father, he said, "We live in a world of conflict and trouble, of hatred and meanness. I had pointed out to me this

morning the place where the terrible bombing [on one of several trains] took place. I said to myself, 'There could be no such thing, there would be no such thing, if all men believed in God the Eternal Father, and that we are all brothers and sisters.'"

President Hinckley also quoted the ninth article of faith and testified that revelation is needed today as much as ever. ■

*Church News* contributed to this report.

## Broadcast Commemorates Restoration of Priesthood

While celebrating the 175th anniversary of the restoration of the priesthood, Church leaders encouraged Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood holders to live worthily.

President Gordon B. Hinckley told priesthood holders assembled at more than 5,500 satellite destinations in about 80 countries about memorizing Doctrine and Covenants 13 as a boy. The verse teaches that the Aaronic Priesthood holds the keys of the ministering of angels. He quoted President Wilford Woodruff, who said: "A Priest holds the keys of the ministering of angels. Never in my life, as an Apostle, as a Seventy, or as an Elder, have I ever had more of the protection of the Lord than while holding the office of Priest" (Wilford Woodruff, in *Millennial Star*, 5 October 1891, 629).

"If we are to enjoy the protection of ministering

angels, we must live worthy of their companionship," President Hinckley said. He then warned against a few of Satan's traps.

"Even at the risk of losing friends, you must decline" substances that violate the Word of Wisdom, he said. He called pornography an "evil thing" that "leads to evil thoughts and evil behavior. . . . It was designed as a trap for you."

President Hinckley asked, "How can any boy who blesses the sacrament, or passes the sacrament, even think of having tattoos put upon his body?" And, "How could you, as one holding the priesthood and as one who is eligible to receive the ministering of angels, indulge in immorality of any kind?"

President Hinckley told priesthood holders that any who had fallen into these traps could repent, "but it is so much better that you live

in such a way as to have nothing of substance of which to repent."

Addressing Melchizedek Priesthood holders, President Hinckley said, "Could anything be greater or more desirable than to hold the priesthood after the order of the Son of God? These words are so sacred that we do not ordinarily use them," he said, explaining why the priesthood is named after Melchizedek. "No king, no president, no head of state . . . has such authority."

President Hinckley outlined the unbroken line of men through which he received his authority directly from the Lord Jesus Christ, and said that each priesthood holder could trace his authority in similar fashion. "[The priesthood's] origin is not shrouded in the foggy mists of history," he said.

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, also addressed the significance of the Restoration with regard to priesthood authority. With the visits of John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, these "brethren connected the line of covenant priesthood authority to the restored Church," creating "an unbroken chain of prophets and apostles" through which authority has passed "from one generation to the next," he said.

"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not just an adjustment of or a correction of what had become of Christianity



**President Gordon B. Hinckley encouraged priesthood bearers to live worthily.**

following the great Apostasy. It is a replacement, a restoration of organization and authority to what had been when Christ established it," President Packer stated. The restoration of the priesthood made possible a latter-day "kingdom of priests" (Exodus 19:5-6), made up of "ordinary men" able to administer "priestly ordinances," he said. "We know the Lord trusts us, otherwise He would not give into our hands this great work and make of us a 'kingdom of priests.' That trust is very precious."

Presiding Bishop H. David Burton challenged the young men to memorize section 13 of the Doctrine and Covenants and to stay close to their bishops. "This man of God . . . is uniquely positioned by our Heavenly Father to help you stand strong against the buffetings of Satan."

A combined Aaronic Priesthood choir from Layton, Utah, performed a new original hymn entitled "Young Men of Zion." The broadcast, held in the Conference Center on 15 May 2004, was translated into 66 languages. ■

# New Area Leadership Assignments

The First Presidency has announced changes in assignments for area leadership. The changes are effective beginning 15 August 2004.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have completed assignments as Presidents of the Philippines and Chile Areas respectively. Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will serve as President of the Europe Central Area.

Areas in the United States and Canada will now be supervised by the Presidency of the Seventy, under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. While the entire Presidency is responsible for overseeing the work in the 11 affected areas, each member of the Presidency has been assigned specific areas.

All members of Area Presidencies belong to the First or Second Quorum of the Seventy unless otherwise noted. ■

## Presidency of the Seventy



EARL C. TINGEY  
1. NORTH AMERICA EAST  
2. NORTH AMERICA NORTHEAST



D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON  
3. NORTH AMERICA SOUTHEAST



DAVID E. SORENSON  
4. NORTH AMERICA NORTHWEST  
5. NORTH AMERICA WEST



CHARLES DIDIER  
6. NORTH AMERICA SOUTHWEST



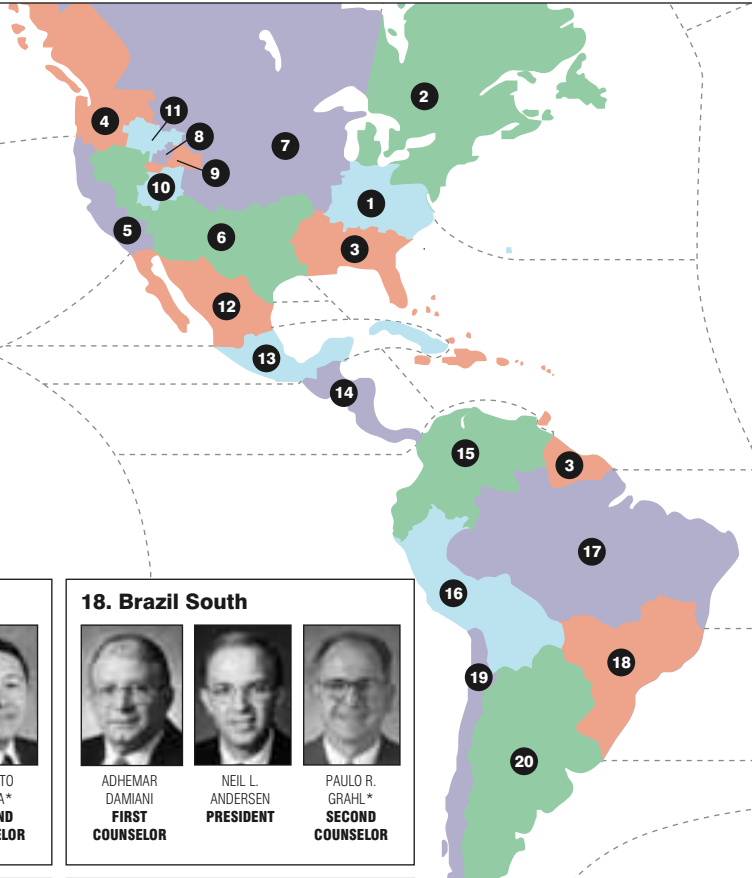
DIETER F. UCHTDORF  
7. NORTH AMERICA CENTRAL



MERRILL J. BATEMAN  
8. UTAH NORTH  
9. UTAH SALT LAKE CITY  
10. UTAH SOUTH



JOHN H. GROBERG  
11. IDAHO



### 12. Mexico North



NED B. ROUECHÉ  
FIRST COUNSELOR



ROBERT J. WHETTEN  
PRESIDENT



JORGE A. ROJAS\*  
SECOND COUNSELOR

### 15. South America North



WALTER F. GONZÁLEZ  
FIRST COUNSELOR



CLAUDIO R. M. COSTA  
PRESIDENT



ROBERTO GARCÍA\*  
SECOND COUNSELOR

### 18. Brazil South



ADHEMAR DAMIANI  
FIRST COUNSELOR



NEIL L. ANDERSEN  
PRESIDENT



PAULO R. GRAHL\*  
SECOND COUNSELOR

### 13. Mexico South



CLATE W. MASK JR.  
FIRST COUNSELOR



CRAIG C. CHRISTENSEN  
PRESIDENT



BENJAMIN DE HOYOS\*  
SECOND COUNSELOR

### 16. South America West



JAMES M. DUNN  
FIRST COUNSELOR



CARLOS H. AMADO  
PRESIDENT



WILLY F. ZUZUNAGA\*  
SECOND COUNSELOR

### 19. Chile



CARL B. PRATT  
FIRST COUNSELOR



FRANCISCO J. VIÑAS  
PRESIDENT



OSCAR W. CHAVEZ\*  
SECOND COUNSELOR

### 21. Europe West



GERALD N. LUND  
FIRST COUNSELOR



HAROLD G. HILLAM  
PRESIDENT



DAVID S. BAXTER\*  
SECOND COUNSELOR

### 14. Central America



W. DOUGLAS SHUMWAY  
FIRST COUNSELOR



SPENCER V. JONES  
PRESIDENT



E. ISRAEL PÉREZ\*  
SECOND COUNSELOR

### 17. Brazil North



MERVYN B. ARNOLD  
FIRST COUNSELOR



ROBERT R. STEUER  
PRESIDENT



PEDRO J. PEÑA\*  
SECOND COUNSELOR

### 20. South America South



LYNN G. ROBBINS  
FIRST COUNSELOR



L. WHITNEY CLAYTON  
PRESIDENT



CARLOS E. AGÜERO\*  
SECOND COUNSELOR

### 22. Europe Central



BRUCE C. HAFEN  
FIRST COUNSELOR

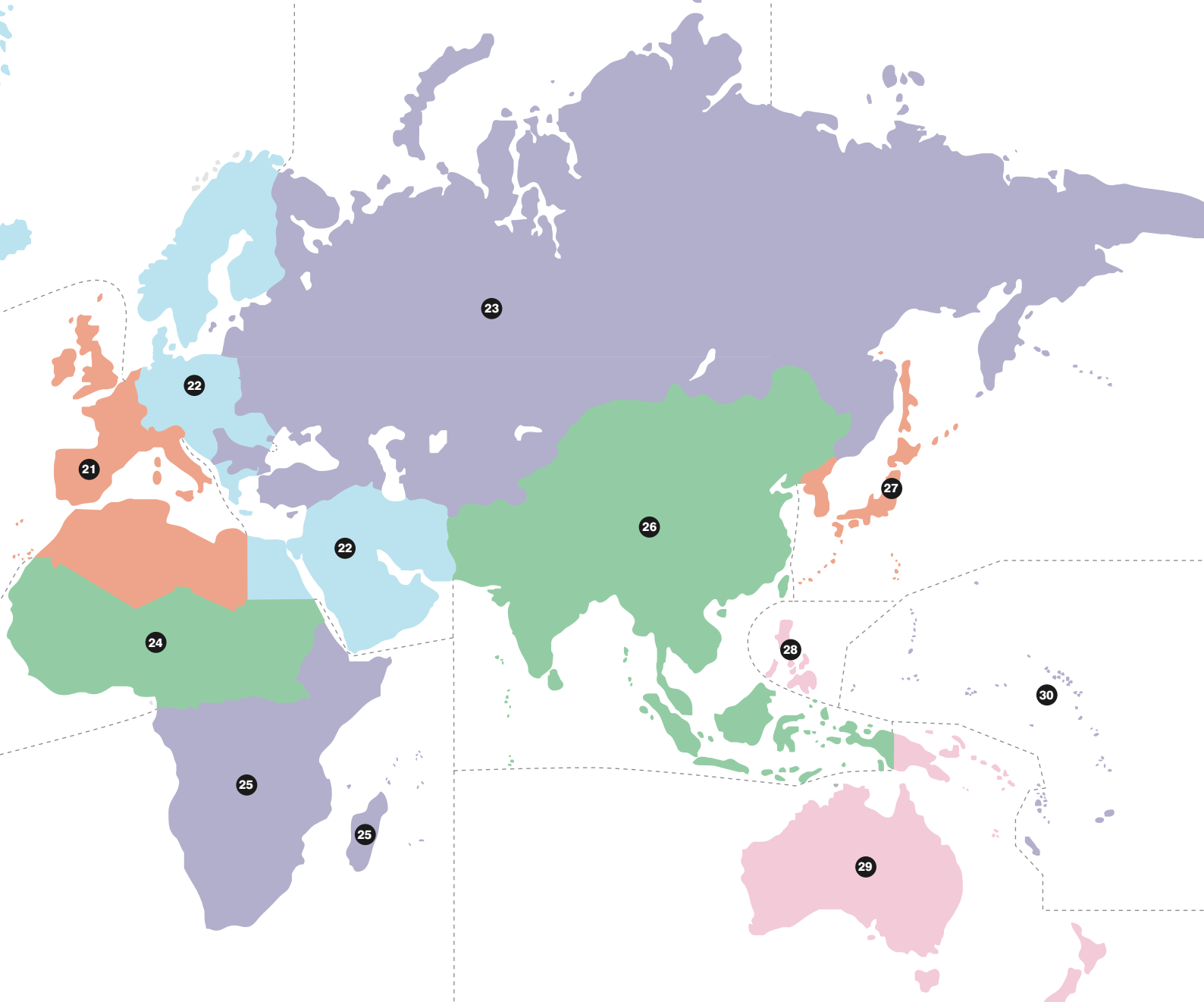


L. TOM PERRY\*\*  
PRESIDENT



W. CRAIG ZWICK  
SECOND COUNSELOR

\*Area Authority Seventy, \*\*Member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



**23. Europe East**



ROBERT F. ORTON  
**FIRST COUNSELOR**

DENNIS B. NEUENSCHWANDER  
**PRESIDENT**

WAYNE S. PETERSON  
**SECOND COUNSELOR**

**25. Africa Southeast**



CHRISTOFFEL GOLDEN JR.  
**FIRST COUNSELOR**

STEVEN E. SNOW  
**PRESIDENT**

WILLIAM W. PARMLEY  
**SECOND COUNSELOR**

**27. Asia North**



WILLIAM R. WALKER  
**FIRST COUNSELOR**

YOSHIHIKO KIKUCHI  
**PRESIDENT**

WON YONG KO\*  
**SECOND COUNSELOR**

**29. Australia/New Zealand**



JOHN M. MADSEN  
**FIRST COUNSELOR**

KENNETH JOHNSON  
**PRESIDENT**

LINDSAY T. DILL\*  
**SECOND COUNSELOR**

**24. Africa West**



H. ROSS WORKMAN  
**FIRST COUNSELOR**

SHELDON F. CHILD  
**PRESIDENT**

R. CONRAD SCHULTZ  
**SECOND COUNSELOR**

**26. Asia**



DARYL H. GARN  
**FIRST COUNSELOR**

JOHN B. DICKSON  
**PRESIDENT**

D. ALLEN ANDERSEN\*  
**SECOND COUNSELOR**

**28. Philippines**



D. REX GERRATT  
**FIRST COUNSELOR**

RICHARD J. MAYNES  
**PRESIDENT**

DAVID R. STONE  
**SECOND COUNSELOR**

**30. Pacific Islands**



DENNIS E. SIMMONS  
**FIRST COUNSELOR**

ROBERT K. DELLENBACH  
**PRESIDENT**

SPENCER J. CONDIE  
**SECOND COUNSELOR**

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## Elder Nelson Speaks in Ukraine, Establishes First Stake

Nations that cultivate freedom of religious expression will produce finer individuals, changed for good. Their families will be stronger and more secure. They will be better citizens who honor the laws of the land, who are more charitable, more peaceful and prosperous,” Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said as the keynote speaker at a conference on religious freedom in Kiev, Ukraine, on 27 May 2004.

At the two-day conference, Elder Nelson addressed governmental representatives from 24 nations who have responsibility for religious affairs in their countries.

“Governments are established for the benefit of their citizens, who should be equally protected and equally obligated under the law, be they believers or nonbelievers,” he said. “Our Creator and Judge holds government leaders accountable for their acts in relation to their citizens.”

Focusing on rights that should be established in every nation, Elder Nelson said, quoting from a UN declaration, “Fundamental religious rights include: the right to believe or disbelieve; the right to worship, either alone or with others; the right to assemble for religious purposes; the right to own or occupy property for the purpose of worship; the right to

perform religious ceremonies; the right to possess and distribute religious media; and the right to establish rules for fellowship in a religious society.”

Elder Nelson shared how he has grown by following the values of his religion. “It requires me to strive to live a constantly improving life. . . . My faith gives me hope. And it assures me that each blessing comes not by chance but by obedience to the law upon which that blessing is predicated.”

Elder Nelson shared his testimony with the delegates, saying, “God lives! . . . There is no direction in which we can turn, no philosophical shield behind which we can

hide, no parliamentary edict we can assert which will evade God’s exacting gaze, or excuse us from obedience to His commandments.”

The next day, Elder Nelson organized the first stake in Ukraine. Thirteen years after missionaries entered the country in 1991, membership there has grown to about 8,500.

“Now you take your place among the stakes of Zion,” Elder Nelson told the gathered members. “You are now a part of the heart of the Church.”

Elder Nelson blessed the members and asked them to love their neighbors as Christ loves them, to share the gospel with others, and to prepare for the temple by doing their family history work. ■

*Church News* contributed to this report.

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## Wards Finding Success in Missionary Efforts

By Adam C. Olson, Church Magazines

Six years ago, Joseph Ranseth was looking for truth. He had attended a Christian high school, bounced from church to church, and was praying to find a religion founded on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Then a college student, Joseph says he met Latter-day Saint missionaries and “argued with them for nine months” about doctrine. But Joseph accepted the invitation to attend various activities at the local student ward in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

“I had members calling me up after activities,” he says.

“One member called almost every day, not as an assignment, but to ask me what I’d been reading in the scriptures. They didn’t just answer questions; they helped me feel the love of Christ.”

Thanks in part to the efforts of the members, Joseph was baptized in 1999.

### Taking Responsibility

Encouraging members to take a more active role in missionary work was part of the reason stake missions were dissolved in early 2002 and the responsibility for missionary work was placed on stake and district presidents,

bishops, branch presidents, and the members of their Church units. Church units that have embraced the responsibility of missionary work are finding increasing success as members focus on sharing the gospel.

In 2002, the year the change was announced, there was one convert baptism in the Wellington (YSA) Ward, Winnipeg Manitoba Stake, where Joseph Ranseth had been baptized. After returning from the Utah Provo Mission, one of the areas where the new program was piloted, Joseph helped the young single adult ward

implement the new emphasis. He says, “The ward has become really unified, and the members have shown investigators the same love that I felt.” In 2003, the ward had 13 convert baptisms.

### Getting Organized

Successful ward and branch missionary work is fostered by the stake or district president and bishop or branch president. “To a great extent, the success of this change will depend on the ability of the bishops [and branch presidents] . . . to embrace and magnify this responsibility,” said Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (see “The Role of



Members in Conversion,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2003, 52–58).

Bishop Won Mong Jeong of the Oncheon Ward, Busan Korea Stake, agrees. “The interest and passion about missionary work in our ward has increased . . . because of the increased responsibility of the bishop for missionary work.” In 2002, the Oncheon Ward had six convert baptisms. There were 25 in 2003.

Bishops should use their priesthood executive committee and ward council meetings to promote and coordinate efforts to share the gospel in the ward, according to Elder Oaks. Branch presidents should act similarly.

The ward mission leader is responsible for assisting the bishop with missionary work. Regular but brief meetings keep Joseph Ranseth, as ward mission leader, up to date on those whom the full-time missionaries are teaching and

what support the investigators need from members. Joseph takes that information to the ward’s regular council meeting, where the bishop makes assignments to meet those needs. Because Joseph keeps an updated form with names, contact information, and action items, the discussion doesn’t take long. Ward leaders also plan and coordinate gospel-sharing activities, and that information is relayed back to the full-time missionaries.

Enthusiastic ward and branch missionaries help the work run smoothly. The Wellington Ward finds many of their ward missionaries among new converts because of their enthusiasm.

#### Increasing Our Efforts

“Members simply must take a more active role in our missionary efforts at every stage,” said Elder Oaks. “Some members do not

actively participate in sharing the gospel because they don’t feel comfortable starting a religious conversation or they don’t know what to say.” Elder Oaks suggested giving out pass-along cards and inviting friends to visit [www.mormon.org](http://www.mormon.org).

Planning activities and inviting friends to attend is another way to introduce others to the gospel. One of the Oncheon Ward’s most successful activities has been a conversational English class for families. “It is easier to approach our friends and relatives with the English program than it is to start off by inviting them to hear the gospel,” Bishop Jeong says. The ward also holds a monthly activity to “get to know investigators better and help them feel the importance of the family,” he says. During vacation from school, the ward offers free children’s classes on playing the violin and sewing quilts.

Members in the Wellington Ward have tried a number of activities. Those who wouldn’t feel comfortable attending a fireside may come if a dinner is served first. Those who might not attend anything gospel-related may make friends at a sports activity.

Elder Oaks noted that President Hinckley has challenged members of the Church to increase and retain the number of our Father in Heaven’s children brought into the Church every year. “We cannot do this without increasing our members’ efforts in sharing the gospel,” Elder Oaks said. ■

## Comment

I got my copy of the *Ensign* here in prison last week and I read President Gordon B. Hinckley’s conference address “I Was an Hungred, and Ye Gave Me Meat” (May 2004, 58–61). Obviously, I’m presently sensitive to the portion of Matthew 25 that refers to being in prison and, further, to being “the least of these.”

I don’t know the number of those with callings to minister to those of us in prison, but I know each handshake, each word of encouragement, and each tear that is shed with me. I am touched that they come faithfully, even on Christmas Day, to teach and love us. They pray for and with us, witness to us of our worth, put our names on the temple prayer rolls, and give us priesthood blessings. They are here when our own parents and siblings have disowned us. They encourage my husband and children. They serve beyond the call of duty.

There are others who are not “called,” but who take this love seriously: the teachers and coaches who bless my kids, a few diligent ward members, my in-laws, many friends, and the priceless stand-in “moms” who show by their actions to my family what the gospel is.

I can personally testify that the Church both teaches and organizes the service President Hinckley’s address outlines. I haven’t the capacity to express my gratitude. I am “the least of these.”

*Name withheld*

## Call for Articles

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

*My friend’s father passed away recently. I’d like to help my friend, but I don’t know how. What should I do?*

Send responses by 15 September 2004 to *Ensign* Editorial, 24th Floor, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA, or to [cur-editorial-ensign@ldschurch.org](mailto:cur-editorial-ensign@ldschurch.org). Clearly mark your submission

“Questions and Answers,” and at the top of your submission, write your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, 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

AUGUST 2004

clinical depression? As a parent, what can you do to help your child? See “When Your Child Is Depressed,” page 52.

### Just a Little STRESSED?

You can walk, bike, or swim to find relief from everyday stress, giving your mind, body, and spirit welcome relief. See “Move More, Stress Less,” page 58.

### The Next Step: Relief Society

Moving into Relief Society is a big step for young women; for some, it may be intimidating. But you can help ease their way and make them feel at home. See “Welcome to Relief Society” on page 14 for some ideas. You may also want to refer young women to “Your Next Step” on page 10 of this month’s *New Era* for help in making that step into Relief Society.

### The Challenge of Forgiving

Wait—it was someone else who hurt you, who damaged your good name, who misused you! So how are *you* on trial? Why is the commandment to forgive so vital to happiness? See “Forgiveness: Our Challenge and Our Blessing,” page 44.

### The Focus Point of Sacrament Meeting

“Bishoprics and branch presidencies need to plan sacrament meetings thoughtfully in order to keep the meetings focused on the Lord and His Atonement, His example, and the doctrines of the gospel,” Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaches. For counsel and guidelines on planning sacrament meetings, see “Worshiping at Sacrament Meeting,” page 24.

### Is Your Child Truly Depressed?

It is normal for children and teenagers to experience episodes of sadness and discouragement, but when do such feelings qualify as

### Home Teachers, Visiting Teachers

Find the monthly messages on page 2 and page 67.



### Scenes from the Book of Mormon

Do you need an illustration for a lesson on the Book of Mormon? You may find just what you’re looking for in the works of Latter-day Saint artists depicted on pages 38–41.

### One-Stop Family Help

Are you looking for help with family home evening? Information on one of your ancestors? Facts about food storage? A way to purchase gospel teaching

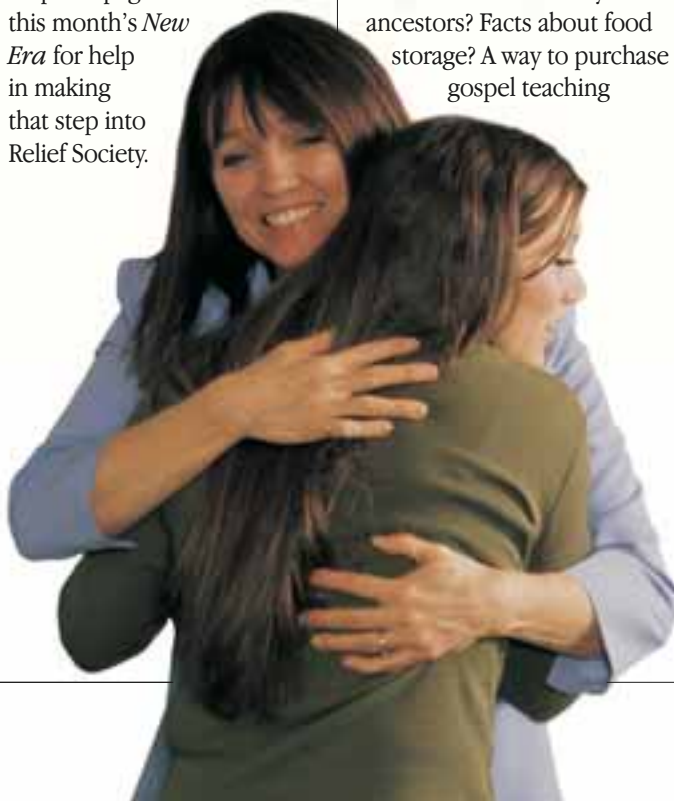
materials that are not available in your area? You can find all of these things in one place: [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org). On the Church’s Web site, you can find family home evening lessons and activity materials (click on Home and Family),

information on your ancestors and family history research (click on Family History), food storage tips (Provident Living), and materials you can use in teaching or in personal study, from books

and pamphlets to audio recordings and videos (Order Church Materials). The Web site is a portal to this and much more that is designed to strengthen members and families. Try it. You may be surprised and delighted by what you find at [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org).

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**How Great Thou Art (embroidery), by Carmen Suarez**

*"I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works. I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High" (Psalm 9:1-2).*



*This three-panel painting is typical of the Book of Mormon art found in “Exceedingly Great Faith” on page 38. It tells the story of the conversion of Alma the Younger.*

*Panel 1: “[Alma] did go about secretly with the sons of Mosiah seeking to destroy the church” (Mosiab 27:10). Panel 2: “Behold, the angel of the Lord . . . spake as it were with a voice of thunder; . . . [and] they fell to the earth” (vv. 11–12).*

*Panel 3: After Alma the Younger was struck dumb for two days and two nights, he “received . . . strength, . . . for, said he, I have repented of my sins, and . . . behold I am born of the Spirit” (vv. 23–24).*