

Ensign

COVER STORY

**Single and
Steadfast:
Lessons in
Hope, p. 20**

**Finding Comfort in King
Benjamin's Counsel, p. 25**

**Making the Most of
Our Single Years, p. 26**





And My Soul Hungered, by Al R. Young

MAY NOT BE COPIED

Enos wrote: "I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, before I received a remission of my sins. . . . My soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him" (Enos 2, 4).

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In what ways has life turned out different for you than you once anticipated? How have you adapted? What part has putting faith in the Lord played as you have made different plans? Please label submissions "Going Forward with Faith" and send them by October 3, 2008. You can find this and other calls for articles online at <http://ensign.lds.org>.

Ensign Magazine Writers' Guidelines are posted on the same page under "Resources."

Send submissions to ensign@ldschurch.org or Ensign Editorial, 50 E. North Temple Street, Room 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA. Include your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, ward (or branch), and stake (or district). Because of the volume of submissions, we cannot acknowledge receipt. Authors whose work is selected for publication will be notified. If you would like your manuscript, photos, art, or other material returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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USING THIS ISSUE

Living fully. Several articles in this month's issue focus on living rich, productive lives (see pp. 4, 20, 26). Your circumstances may differ from those described in the articles, but think about how the principles apply to your situation.

Teaching children what matters most. Pages 34, 52, 54, and 60 address some of the challenges of parenthood—as well as approaches that some parents are taking in teaching the gospel to their children. After reading these articles, consider what you might do to teach gospel principles more effectively.

Connect scriptures with general conference addresses. Now that you have ideas for getting more out of your scripture study (p. 17), you might be interested in other tools that can offer insight and background. For instance, the Web site scriptures.BYU.edu links scripture verses to the general conference addresses in which the verses were cited.



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COMING IN SEPTEMBER

Look for articles on:

- **Hope and healing for victims of abuse.**
- **Letters between Joseph and Emma Smith.**
- **Progressing spiritually when a spouse is not supportive of Church activity.**



May We So Live

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

Suddenly and without warning, on a bright day in September almost seven years ago, two airliners crashed into the twin towers of New York City's World Trade Center, leaving devastating destruction and death. In Washington, D.C., and in Pennsylvania, two other airliners came down, also as a result of a terrorist plot. These tragedies snuffed out the lives of thousands of men, women, and children. Evaporated were well-laid plans for pleasant futures. Instead, there were tears of sorrow and cries of pain from wounded souls.

Countless were the reports we heard of those who were touched in some way—either directly or indirectly—by the events of that day. Rebecca Sindar was on a flight from Salt Lake City, Utah, to Dallas, Texas, on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001. Her flight, like all others in the United States at that time of tragedies, was interrupted; the plane was grounded in Amarillo, Texas. Sister Sindar reported: “We all left the plane and found televisions in the airport, where we crowded around to see the broadcast of what had happened. People were lined up to call loved ones to assure them we were safely on the ground. I shall always remember the 12 or so missionaries

who were on their way to the mission field on our flight. They made phone calls, and then we saw them huddled in a circle in a corner of the airport, kneeling in prayer together. How I wish I could have captured that moment to share with the mothers and fathers of those sweet young men as they saw the need for prayer right away.”

Death's Darkness Dispelled

Death eventually comes to all humankind. It comes to the aged as they walk on faltering feet. Its summons is heard by those who have scarcely reached midway in life's journey, and often it hushes the laughter of little children. Death is one fact that no one can escape or deny.

Frequently death comes as an intruder. It is an enemy that suddenly appears in the midst of life's feast, putting out its lights and gaiety. Death lays its heavy hand upon those dear to us and at times leaves us baffled and wondering. In certain situations, as in great suffering and illness, death comes as an angel of mercy. But for the most part, we think of it as the enemy of human happiness.

The darkness of death, however, can ever be dispelled by the light of revealed truth.

“I am the resurrection, and the life,” spoke



How fragile life, how certain death. We do not know when we will be required to leave this mortal existence. And so I ask, “What are we doing with today?”

Saul, on the road to Damascus, had a vision of the risen, exalted Christ. Later, as Paul, defender of truth and fearless missionary in the service of the Master, he bore witness of the risen Lord.

the Master. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."¹

This reassurance—yes, even holy confirmation—of life beyond the grave could well provide the peace promised by the Savior when He assured His disciples: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."²

Out of the darkness and the horror of Calvary came the voice of the Lamb, saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."³ And the dark was no longer dark, for He was with His Father. He had come from God, and to Him He had returned. So also

those who walk with God in this earthly pilgrimage know from blessed experience that He will not abandon

His children who trust in Him. In the night of death, His presence will be "better than [a] light and safer than a known way."⁴

Saul, on the road to Damascus, had a vision of the risen, exalted Christ. Later, as Paul, defender of truth and fearless missionary in the service of the Master, he bore witness of the risen Lord as he declared to the Saints at Corinth:

"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

". . . he was buried, and . . . he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

". . . he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

"After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once. . . .

"After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

"And last of all he was seen of me."⁵

In our dispensation this same testimony was spoken boldly by the Prophet Joseph Smith, as he and Sidney Rigdon testified:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him,



this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

“That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.”⁶

This is the knowledge that sustains. This is the truth that comforts. This is the assurance that guides those bowed down with grief out of the shadows and into the light. It is available to all.

Doing Something Today

How fragile life, how certain death. We do not know when we will be required to leave this mortal existence. And so I ask, “What are we doing with today?” If we live only for tomorrow, we’ll eventually have a lot of empty yesterdays. Have we been guilty of declaring, “I’ve been thinking about making some course corrections in my life. I plan to take the first step—tomorrow”? With such thinking, tomorrow is forever. Such tomorrows rarely come unless we do something about them today. As the familiar hymn teaches:

*There are chances for work all around just now,
Opportunities right in our way.
Do not let them pass by, saying, “Sometime I’ll try,”
But go and do something today.*⁷

Let us ask ourselves the questions: “Have I done any good in the world today? Have I helped anyone in need?” What a formula for happiness! What a prescription for contentment, for inner peace—to have inspired gratitude in another human being.

Our opportunities to give of ourselves are indeed limitless, but they are also perishable. There are hearts to gladden. There are kind words to say. There are gifts to be given. There are deeds to be done. There are souls to be saved.

As we remember that “when ye are in the service of your



***If we lift one weary hand
which hangs down, if we
bring peace to one struggling
soul, if we give as did the
Master, we can—by showing
the way—become a guiding
star for some lost mariner.***

fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God,”⁸ we will not find ourselves in the unenviable position of Jacob Marley’s ghost, who spoke to Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens’s immortal *Christmas Carol*.

Marley spoke sadly of opportunities lost. Said he: “Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life’s opportunity misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!”

Marley added: “Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode? Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted *me!*”

Fortunately, as we know, Ebenezer Scrooge changed his life for the better. I love his line, “I am not the man I was.”⁹

Why is Dickens’s *Christmas Carol* so popular? Why is it ever new? I personally feel it is inspired of God. It brings out the best within human nature. It gives hope. It motivates change. We can turn from the paths which would lead us down and, with a song in our hearts, follow a star and walk toward the light. We can quicken our step, bolster our courage, and bask in the sunlight of truth. We can hear more clearly the laughter of little children. We can dry the tear of the weeping. We can comfort the dying by sharing the promise of eternal life. If we lift one weary hand which hangs down, if we bring peace to one struggling soul, if we give as did the Master, we can—by showing the way—become a guiding star for some lost mariner.

Fill Others’ Hearts

Because life is fragile and death inevitable, we must make the most of each day.

There are many ways in which we can misuse our opportunities. Some time ago I read a tender story written by Louise Dickinson Rich which vividly illustrates this truth. She wrote:

“My grandmother had an enemy named Mrs. Wilcox. Grandma and Mrs. Wilcox moved, as brides, into next-door houses on the main street of the tiny town in which they were to live out their lives. I don’t know what started the war between them—and I don’t think that by the time I came along, over thirty years later, they remembered themselves what started it. This was no polite sparring match; this was total war. . . .

“Nothing in town escaped repercussion. The 300-year-old church, which had lived through the Revolution, the Civil War, and the Spanish War, almost went down when Grandma and Mrs. Wilcox fought the Battle of the Ladies’ Aid. Grandma won that engagement, but it was a hollow victory. Mrs. Wilcox, since she couldn’t be president, resigned [from the Aid] in a huff. What’s the fun of running a thing if you can’t force your enemy to eat crow? Mrs. Wilcox won the Battle of the Public Library, getting her niece, Gertrude, appointed librarian instead of Aunt Phyllis. The day Gertrude took over was the day Grandma stopped reading library books. They became ‘filthy gemy things’ overnight. The Battle of the High School was a draw. The principal got a better job and left before Mrs. Wilcox succeeded in having him ousted or Grandma in having him given life tenure of office.

“When as children we visited my grandmother, part of the fun was making faces at Mrs. Wilcox’s grandchildren. One banner day we put a snake into the Wilcox rain barrel. My grandmother made token protests, but we sensed tacit sympathy.

“Don’t think for a minute that this was a one-sided campaign. Mrs. Wilcox had grandchildren, too. Grandma didn’t get off scot free. Never a windy washday went by that the clothesline didn’t mysteriously break, with the clothes falling in the dirt.

“I don’t know how Grandma could have borne her troubles so long if it hadn’t been for the household page of her daily Boston newspaper. This household page was a wonderful institution. Besides the usual cooking hints and cleaning advice, it had a department composed of letters from readers to each other. The idea was that if you had a problem—or even only some steam to blow off—you

wrote a letter to the paper, signing some fancy name like Arbutus. That was Grandma’s pen name. Then some of the other ladies who had the same problem wrote back and told you what they had done about it, signing themselves One Who Knows or Xanthippe or whatever. Very often, the problem disposed of, you kept on for years writing to each other through the column of the paper, telling each other about your children and your canning and your new dining-room suite. That’s what happened to Grandma. She and a woman called Sea Gull corresponded for a quarter of a century. Sea Gull was Grandma’s true friend.

“When I was about sixteen, Mrs. Wilcox died. In a small town, no matter how much you have hated your next-door neighbor, it is only common decency to run over and see what practical service you can do the bereaved. Grandma, neat in a percale apron to show that she meant what she said about being put to work, crossed the lawn to the

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After prayerfully studying this message, share it using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. Following are some examples:

1. Discuss with the family how “the darkness of death . . . can ever be dispelled by the light of revealed truth.” Read parts of the article that teach about the Resurrection. How can these truths bring peace and comfort to those who mourn?
2. Point out the formula for happiness in the section “Doing Something Today.” Sing or read the hymn “Have I Done Any Good?” Ask family members why they think this formula brings happiness. What are some of the things they could do to inspire gratitude in others?
3. Ask family members to list some fond memories that a person could have at the end of his or her life. Read the story written by Louise Dickinson Rich and the last paragraph of President Monson’s message. Talk with the younger children about the things that matter most to them now. Encourage family members to live a good and joyful life, without regrets.

Wilcox house, where the Wilcox daughters set her to cleaning the already-immaculate front parlor for the funeral. And there on the parlor table in the place of honor was a huge scrapbook; and in the scrapbook, pasted neatly in parallel columns were Grandma's letters to Sea Gull over the years and Sea Gull's letters to her. Though neither woman had known it, Grandma's worst enemy had been her best friend. That was the only time I remember seeing my grandmother cry. I didn't know then exactly what she was crying about, but I do now. She was crying for all the wasted years which could never be salvaged."¹⁰

May we resolve from this day forward to fill our hearts with love. May we go the extra mile to include in our lives any who are lonely or downhearted or who are suffering in any way. May we "[cheer] up the sad and [make] someone feel glad."¹¹ May we live so that when that final summons is heard, we may have no serious regrets, no unfinished business, but will be able to say with the Apostle Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."¹² ■

NOTES

1. John 11:25–26.
2. John 14:27.
3. Luke 23:46.

4. Minnie Louise Haskins, "The Gate of the Year," in James Dalton Morrison, ed., *Masterpieces of Religious Verse* (1948), 92.
5. 1 Corinthians 15:3–8.
6. D&C 76:22–24.
7. Will L. Thompson, "Have I Done Any Good?" *Hymns*, no. 223.
8. Mosiah 2:17.
9. (New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1990), 34, 138.
10. "Grandma and the Seagull," in Alice Arlen, *She Took to the Woods: A Biography and Selected Writings of Louise Dickinson Rich* (2000), 211–13.
11. *Hymns*, no. 223.
12. 2 Timothy 4:7.

In the scrapbook, pasted neatly in parallel columns were Grandma's letters to Sea Gull over the years and Sea Gull's letters to her. Though neither woman had known it, Grandma's worst enemy had been her best friend."



Elder D. Todd Christofferson

PREPARED TO SERVE THE LORD



BY ELDER QUENTIN L. COOK

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

As a teenager living in Somerset, New Jersey, Todd Christofferson participated in the cast of the Hill Cumorah Pageant near Palmyra, New York, for two summers. During the production his first year, young Todd remembered the words of a former bishop. He had encouraged the youth of the ward to never give up striving with the Lord until they had “burned into [their] hearts a testimony of the gospel.”

Todd had taken the words of his priesthood leader seriously and had prayed about his testimony from time to time. But there in Palmyra, the cradle of the Restoration, he determined this was the time and place he was going to get a sure confirmation.

“One night after the performance, I went to the Sacred Grove alone,” he remembers. “It was a beautiful summer evening. I took off my shoes, went in, and began to pray. I prayed very diligently for an hour, maybe more—and nothing happened.”

After some time, he gave up and left. Disappointment consumed him. What had he done wrong? Why hadn’t Heavenly Father answered his prayer?

In what seemed like no time at all, the two-week stretch of pageant performances ended, and Todd returned to New Jersey. About a month later, as he was reading the Book of Mormon at home in his bedroom, he received his answer.

“Without my asking for it, the witness came,” he recalls. “It came without words, but I received a very powerful spiritual confirmation—





the kind that leaves no doubt—about the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith.

“Looking back on that experience, I realize that we can’t dictate to God when, where, or how He will speak to us. We just have to be open to receive what He disposes, when He disposes it. It comes according to *His* will.

“I’m glad that Heavenly Father didn’t respond to me that night in Palmyra. I might have thought that you have to be in a special place to get an answer to prayer or to gain a testimony. But you don’t have to make a pilgrimage to Palmyra to know that Joseph Smith was a prophet or that the Book of Mormon is true. You don’t have to go to Jerusalem to know that Jesus is the Christ. If Heavenly Father found me in Somerset, New Jersey, He can answer the prayers of anybody, anywhere in the world. He knows us intimately, and He can answer us whatever our place or circumstances.”

With that testimony “burned” into his heart, Todd Christofferson was preparing for a life of service in the Lord’s kingdom.

Idyllic Childhood

David Todd Christofferson was born to Paul Vickery and Jeanne Swenson Christofferson on January 24, 1945, in American Fork, Utah. His father was in China, serving in the U.S. military near the end of World War II, so

Todd and his mother lived with Sister Christofferson’s parents, Helge and Adena Swenson, for approximately 18 months. This was the start of a close relationship between Todd and his grandparents, one that would be extremely influential throughout his life.

Todd and his four younger brothers were raised in Pleasant Grove and Lindon, Utah. They enjoyed what he describes as an “idyllic” and “wholesome” childhood, one in which the boys enjoyed unstructured time to play, invent, and learn.

“We had a very secure, happy home life,” Elder Christofferson remembers. “Father and Mother taught us through their examples and showed us how to live according to the pattern of the gospel.”

His parents, in turn, remember Todd as an obedient, happy son. “Todd was a good boy and always knew what kind of life he wanted to live,” his father says. “He was a great influence on his brothers.”

His parents also recall that he was eager to help wherever he saw a need. When Todd was 13 years old, his mother underwent significant surgery as part of cancer treatment. Elder Christofferson’s father, who was with her at the hospital, learned that Todd had gathered his brothers to pray for their mother.

The surgery was successful, but it limited Sister Christofferson’s ability to complete

Opposite page: Todd Christofferson as a teenager at the Hill Cumorah Pageant in Palmyra, New York, in 1962. Above, left to right: Todd with his parents and brother Greg (right) in 1948; the Christofferson brothers—Tim, Todd, Greg, Tom, and Wade—with their grandfather Helge Swenson, in 1964; Todd at approximately six years old. Elder Christofferson remembers his childhood as “wholesome” and “idyllic.”



Above, left to right: Elder Christofferson (left) with missionary companion Glen Willardson, in Salta, Argentina, 1965; Elder Christofferson at a baptism, 1966. Opposite page, left to right: Elder and Sister Christofferson on their wedding day in 1968, with their parents; Elder Christofferson with children Todd and Brynn, acting out the Nativity in 1977; the Christofferson family celebrating the United States' bicentennial in 1976.



some routine household tasks. Todd knew how much his mother loved homemade bread—and how difficult it would be for her to continue to make it. He asked his grandmother to teach him how to bake bread, and he made it regularly for his family until he left for college several years later.

New Home, New Experiences

When Todd was about 15 years old, his father, a veterinarian, took a new job in New Brunswick, New Jersey. At the time of the family's move, Lindon, Utah, had very few people, so the transition to the more populated setting of New Jersey was a dramatic shift for the entire Christofferson family. Still, the next several years—full of new places, people, and opportunities—would be some of the most formative of Todd's life.

The only Church member in his high school class, Todd enjoyed friendships and associations with people from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds, something that would continue throughout his life. Todd discovered that many of his friends felt their beliefs as fervently as he felt his own, which caused him to think deeply and pray fervently about what he knew. "I began to see that the Church wasn't just nice," he says. "It was life-and-death important. I began to appreciate what I had."

Greg Christofferson, one of Elder Christofferson's brothers, who shared a room with him for over 16 years, remembers, "Todd was always spiritually inclined and exemplary

in his conduct." Greg notes that a few years after his brother graduated from high school, one of Todd's outstanding classmates had been praying with his wife about how to raise their young children. When Latter-day Saint missionaries came to their door, the man recalled how good and honorable Todd, one of the only Latter-day Saints he knew, had been. Because of that memory, the man invited the missionaries in, and he and his family joined the Church.

Young Todd's growing testimony—solidified by his experience after the Hill Cumorah Pageant—was further bolstered by a strong, supportive peer group of Latter-day Saint youth in the New Brunswick Ward in the New Jersey Stake, a group that Elder Christofferson says "lived to be together on Wednesdays and Sundays."

"The Church was the center of our family life," Elder Christofferson remembers. "It drew us close as a family, and it drew us closer to others in the ward."

Mission to Argentina

After graduating from Franklin High School in Somerset, Elder Christofferson attended Brigham Young University for a year and then left in September 1964 to serve in the Argentina North Mission, an event he considers seminal. His love for the people and cultures of Latin America has remained a significant part of his life.

During his mission, Elder Christofferson learned from "two exceptional mission presidents," President Ronald V. Stone and President Richard G. Scott, now a fellow

member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Elder Christofferson recalls with great fondness and appreciation the contribution of both presidents and their wives.

Elder Scott remembers Elder Christofferson as “an exceptionally outstanding missionary whose devotion and capacities were evidence that he would have a life of unusual significance.” Elder Scott notes that this young elder was particularly disciplined, obedient, and hardworking, and that he demonstrated “a gentleness of spirit that blessed each of his companions and endeared him to his investigators and converts.”

Elder Scott recalls a particular incident when he saw Elder Christofferson have a bicycle accident in which he damaged his suit and injured his hands. But he was undaunted. Elder Scott says, “He brushed himself off, climbed onto the bicycle, and headed off for an appointment with his companion.”

University and Marriage

After returning from Argentina in December 1966, Elder Christofferson again enrolled at BYU, where he studied English and became involved in student government and intramural athletics.

Toward the end of the first semester after his mission, a pretty young woman he saw on campus caught his attention. Although he didn’t meet her then, he did remember

her face and looked her up when the campus yearbook was published a few months later.

The student was Kathy Jacob, an attractive, gregarious young woman who had lived in both California and Utah. The following fall, when he was back in school, Todd arranged through a mutual friend to take Kathy on a date.

Over the next several months, they found they were compatible. Their love grew and matured, and the following spring, on May 28, 1968, they were married in the Salt Lake Temple.

“I knew Kathy was good and wonderful when we were first married,” Elder Christofferson says. “I just didn’t know how deep her character and qualities and wisdom and goodness really were. I’ve been happily surprised as time has gone by how much better she is than I realized even then.”

The Christoffersons’ daughter, Brynn Nufer, also attests to her mother’s goodness. She says, “Everywhere we have lived, people have just loved her. She’s super creative. She’s real. And she’s fun, fun, fun!”

A Distinguished Law Career

Both Elder and Sister Christofferson graduated from BYU in 1969. Elder Christofferson went on to pursue a law degree





at Duke University. When he completed his schooling in 1972, he was hired as a law clerk to federal judge John J. Sirica, the judge who would later preside at the Watergate trials. *Time* magazine named Judge Sirica Man of the Year and called the Watergate affair “the worst political scandal in U.S. history.”¹ The scandal and its legal trials pervaded the U.S. news in 1973 and 1974.

Elder Christofferson had planned to clerk for one year and then work for a prominent Washington, D.C., law firm, from which he had received an employment offer. Elder Ralph W. Hardy, now an Area Seventy, has spent his career as a member of that firm and remembers that in those difficult Watergate days, Judge Sirica called the firm’s managing partner and said, “I can’t let Todd go. He is too valuable. He is the only person I can talk to.” As a result, Todd assisted Judge Sirica throughout the Watergate proceedings.

Elder Hardy recalls that much later, in 1992, a non-LDS attorney came into his office and exclaimed, “I’ve just come from the most inspiring funeral mass I have ever attended.” It was for Judge Sirica, whose family had requested that Elder Christofferson speak at the funeral. Elder Christofferson had taught the plan of salvation.

Following his clerkship, Elder Christofferson fulfilled an active duty requirement with the U.S. Army, followed by eight years in the inactive reserves. He completed his military commitment as a reserve captain.

Over the next 30 years Elder Christofferson had a distinguished legal career. He worked first at the law firm of Dow Lohnes PLLC, then as in-house counsel for a health-care system and several banking entities. He was associate general counsel of NationsBank Corp. (now Bank of America) at the time of his call to the Seventy. His work took the family to Washington, D.C.; Nashville, Tennessee;

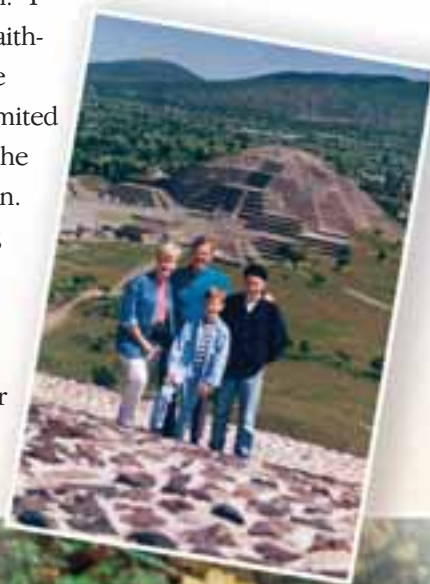
Herndon, Virginia; and Charlotte, North Carolina. What Elder Christofferson says he most enjoyed about the years he and his family spent living in the eastern United States was “association with good people of all walks of life and all faiths.” In addition to his Church service—which included callings as stake mission president, bishop, stake president, and regional representative—he participated in several interfaith and community service groups.

Family Memories

The Christoffersons have five children: Todd, Brynn, Peter, Ryan, and Michael. They also have eight grandchildren. The Christofferson children describe their upbringing as loving, caring, and centered on gospel principles. They remember a good balance of family fun and individual training.

Peter recalls serving as his father’s companion as a new home teacher during a particularly busy period in his father’s life. Elder Christofferson was working as corporate counsel and serving as stake president, but he still made time for teaching his children. “I was inspired by my father’s faithfulness in being a great home teacher, despite his having limited time,” Peter recalls. “One of the sisters we visited was a shut-in. Father cared for her tenderly, making sure that she always had the sacrament and that her needs were met.”

Brynn also remembers her father as being very thoughtful. Just two days after she





left home to attend Brigham Young University, she received flowers from him at her dormitory. The accompanying note said simply, “Have a great semester.”

“While Dad had high expectations of us, he was never preachy. He was very loving and low-key,” she says. “He was very happy, and he wanted us to be happy.”

Service in the Seventy

On April 3, 1993, Elder Christofferson was sustained as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. His initial assignment took his family to Mexico City, where he served for a time as Mexico South Area President.

On August 15, 1998, Elder Christofferson was called as a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, where he served until his call to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. His responsibilities included serving as Executive Director of the Family and Church History Department and then overseeing the North America Southeast Area. Most recently he has had responsibility for the North America Northwest and North America West Areas. His assignments have given him opportunities to meet with Latter-day Saints all over the world.

I am grateful for my association with Elder Christofferson in the Seventy and in the Presidency of the Seventy. He is very capable, is attuned to the promptings of the Spirit, and is loved and admired by the members of

the Seventy. He is known for his great sense of humor, and it is a joy to work with him.

A Call to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Elder Christofferson says that when he received his new calling from President Thomas S. Monson, it initially “seemed impossible.”

“The Apostles are people I’ve admired and followed and listened to all of my life, and it seems impossible for me to be one of them,” he says. “The responsibility seems overwhelming as I contemplate it. But I have had wonderful tutors as I have worked with members of the Seventy and the Quorum of the Twelve over the last 15 years.”

He is also quick to emphasize on whom we all rely—the same Source of his answers when he was a teenager looking to solidify his testimony. “I am a great believer in the power of prayer,” he says. “We can always turn to prayer. Sometimes it’s all we have left, but it’s always sufficient for the need.

“In every crisis, in every transition, in every need I’ve ever had, Heavenly Father has been accessible through prayer. I have trusted in Him and have not been disappointed. Surely His promises are still in place. I know that He will give me the help I need here too.” ■

NOTE

1. “Judge John J. Sirica: Standing Firm for the Primacy of Law,” *Time*, Jan. 7, 1974; available at www.time.com/time/magazine.

Opposite page, left to right: Elder and Sister Christofferson with U.S. federal judge John J. Sirica, for whom Elder Christofferson served as a law clerk during the Watergate trials; the Christoffersons with their children and grandchildren; Elder and Sister Christofferson and their sons Ryan and Michael in Mexico, in 1994. Above, left to right: As one of the Presidents of the Seventy, 1998; Elder and Sister Christofferson with Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi of the Seventy and his wife, Toshiko, at the site where Japan was dedicated for the preaching of the gospel.



The Best Part of the Lesson

BY KIM WOODBURY

A wise institute teacher once gave me some advice that changed my behavior during Church meetings. His advice addresses a problem that often occurs at the end of gospel lessons or talks in sacrament or other meetings. Frequently, when speakers begin to conclude and bear their testimonies, we prepare to leave by zipping scripture cases, shuffling papers, and packing bags. Sometimes the noise is so loud students can barely hear the teacher. Unfortunately, this noise happens at what is often the most significant part of a lesson or talk: the sharing of testimony! The sound disrupts what can be a powerful spiritual experience for the listeners.

My institute teacher suggested a simple solution to this problem: sit still. He challenged us to listen attentively until we hear the word *amen*. Even though we are often anxious to get to another class, chat with friends, or even go home to eat, he urged students not to begin packing up books and papers until the class or meeting is over.

I took this challenge to heart, and the result has been amazing. I feel more spiritually nourished by lessons and talks. I am able to listen to my teachers' conclusions and testimonies rather than concentrate on the next activity. My focus is exactly where it should be. I try to stay alert and attentive until the very end of the lesson, even if everyone is rustling around me. We are commanded to "endure to the end," and I believe that this admonition can apply to meetings and lessons as well (see D&C 14:7). This simple challenge to "sit still" has completely changed the experience I have during sacrament meetings, classes, and even non-Church events. I do not remember the name of my wise institute teacher, but I will never forget his challenge that has allowed me to more fully feast on the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■



Keeping Scripture Study Alive

As members throughout the Church can attest, there are many effective ways to study the scriptures.

In an 1830 revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord invited, “Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me” (D&C 19:23). President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) reaffirmed this promise of peace and direction: “I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns.”¹

Here members share their insights on some ways we can immerse ourselves in the scriptures.

Study the Prophets

I have read the Book of Mormon many times, looking for different themes and teachings each time. This time I chose to approach it with the idea that I wanted to know more about the prophets of the Book of Mormon. When I began in 1 Nephi, I made notes on Lehi in six categories: teachings, personal characteristics, relationship with family, relationship with God, God’s relationship with him, and ways he received revelation. I then studied the same things with the next prophets, Nephi and Jacob. I am trying to identify the similar qualities of the men the Lord calls as prophets and to recognize each prophet’s key teachings.

Deb Walden, California, USA

LEHI AND HIS PEOPLE ARRIVE IN THE PROMISED LAND. BY ARNOLD FRIEBERG

Nephi wrote,
“My soul
delighteth in
the scriptures, and
my heart pondereth
them, and writeth
them for the learning
and the profit of
my children”
(2 Nephi 4:15).

Ask Questions

I ask questions while I read. My questions fall into two categories. First, I try to understand the scripture and see how it might apply to my life. I ask questions like: What in my life is like this situation? What is the principle that is being taught? Why did the author include this? How can I apply this to my life right now? Second, I ask questions about things I am struggling with in my life: situations or problems for which I am searching for an answer. These could be anything from dealing with a family situation to making a career change. As I ask these questions, I may find I spend all of my scripture reading time on just a few verses as I try to listen to the Spirit and find what the Lord is trying to teach me. I have found that answers come when I read with questions in mind.

Joanne Z. Jobanson, California, USA

Picture Yourself in the Scriptures

Whenever I approach the standard works, I do so with a purpose. I try to have the desire to search for something that would

be interesting and useful to me and to others. I find a place free of noise and conversation. I avoid distraction and banish thoughts that are not related to the scriptures. To do this I imagine the physical location where the events I am studying took place and live them as if I were a spectator. My concentration is such

that I completely withdraw from the world around me.

Juan de Dios Sánchez, Dominican Republic

Keep a Scripture Journal

As I reflected on the times in my life when I was immersed in the scriptures, unvaryingly I was keeping a study journal in which I wrote impressions and scripture passages that inspired me. So I found a notebook and a pen and put them with my scriptures. At first, writing about what I read was a chore; it took too much time and effort. Really, I just wanted to have a spiritual snack and then move on with my daily work. But I persisted, and the scriptures came alive. I found myself thinking, dissecting passages, and applying them to my life. Simple phrases provided solutions to perplexing parenting problems. I soon found I could take notes, and it didn't really take any longer than reading alone. I have also found that as I reread past reflections, I find answers to current questions and concerns. It is as if the Lord gives me insight a couple of weeks before I need it.

Erica Miller, Utah, USA

Start with a Prayer

It wasn't until I grasped the concept of praying before I started reading that I noticed a significant improvement in my understanding of the messages that were in the scriptures. I realized that fervent prayer before starting to read allowed the Holy Ghost to speak to my mind. A sincere prayer, stated with real intent to my Father in Heaven, allowed my spirit to commune with the Holy Ghost while I studied and pondered the scriptures. Over time I have found many answers to questions in the scriptures. By focusing my prayers on specific questions

GO WITH A QUESTION

“Sometimes I go to the scriptures for doctrine. Sometimes I go to the scriptures for instruction. I go with a question, and the question usually is ‘What would God have me

do?’ or ‘What would He have me feel?’ Invariably I find new ideas, thoughts I have never had before, and I receive inspiration and instruction and answers to my questions.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “A Discussion on Scripture Study,” *Liahona*, July 2005, 8; *Ensign*, July 2005, 22.



relative to my current situation and asking Heavenly Father to bless my mind with understanding, I am able to receive new insight into areas of concern in my life. As I earnestly seek guidance before I begin reading, I find situations in the scriptures that I can liken unto myself (see 1 Nephi 19:23).

Jess Rudd, Washington, USA

Look for the Teachings of the Savior

While serving as a full-time missionary in the Chile Santiago West Mission, I gained valuable insight into scripture study and how to make it more effective for investigators and myself. One day while teaching a beautiful young family, I felt the clear impression to not only encourage them to read 3 Nephi 11 but to give them a purpose in reading. Rather than simply testifying that they would learn about the Savior's visit to the Americas, my companion and I challenged them to look for what the Savior taught, specifically the first thing He taught. In addition, we involved the children by describing the reading as a treasure hunt; as we did so, we had their undivided attention. With the children excited to help their parents find hidden treasures of truth in the Book of Mormon, we felt much more confident that the family would follow through with their commitment.

When we returned the following day, not only had the family read and not only had they discovered Christ's first teaching to the ancient American inhabitants, but they had outlined almost all of His teachings in the entire chapter. Even the children were excited.

Ryan Gassin, Minnesota, USA

Incorporate General Conference and Hymns

We had been struggling with our family scripture study. Getting our children to pay attention was difficult, so we tried this technique as a family. My husband and I took turns reading

general conference talks out loud to the family, and when we got to a scripture, we called it out. When our children found it, everyone marked it and then one of them read it. As we did so, our kids were poised on the edge of their seats, scriptures and pencils in hand. When we ended, they said, "Oh, please, can't we do just one more scripture?" We finished our scripture study by singing a hymn. As we got ready to sing the closing song, we showed our children how they could look up scriptures in the back of the hymnbook. They found one of the scriptures we had marked, and we sang a song that reinforced the gospel principle we had studied. It was truly meaningful scripture study!

Donna Macurdy Nielson, Virginia, USA ■

NOTE

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 67.



THE ASCENSION, BY HARRY ANDERSON; PHOTOGRAPH OF JOURNAL BY MATTHEW REIER

SINGLE AND STEADFAST:
LESSONS IN
HOPE



BY CHRISTINE S. PACKARD
AND WENDY ULRICH

Though many young adults successfully navigate today's complex dating world, some experience being single with frustration and heartache. As mental health counselors who frequently work with young single adults inside the Church—and as parents of young single adults—we hear numerous stories like these:

Marcie (names have been changed), 31, a successful special-education teacher, owns a home and has a master's degree. She's been dating Dave, 28, for six months. Although they see each other most weekends, Marcie recognizes the familiar signs of a stagnant relationship. She longs for marriage, but Dave seems content with the relationship as it is and acknowledges interest in a couple of other women.

Kevin, 26, enjoys working at his brother's construction company. He is less happy, however, about the difficult endings of his last three dating relationships. Though each relationship appeared to progress for a while, eventually every one of the women said she had other things to accomplish before marrying and wanted only to be friends. Kevin is starting to wonder if he is marriage material.

Janae, 29, was frightened by a physically aggressive young man she dated at age 18. Because she was already lacking confidence, the experience

left her fearful of men. After completing college and a mission, Janae began working for a small accounting firm and moved in with roommates. Watching younger siblings marry and begin their families has been painful for her. Prone to depression, Janae doesn't feel socially skilled. She hasn't had a date in four years.

Jorge, 27, dated regularly during college but never felt the spark that would lead to a deeper relationship. Now in dental school far from home, he attends church in a small branch and has few opportunities to date Latter-day Saint women. Given his

limited options, he has decided to postpone dating and concentrate on his education.

These stories illustrate a growing trend: today more Latter-day Saint young adults are single for longer periods of time. While some single adults are single by choice, many of them would prefer to be married. Some experience singleness as a happy and temporary state, but for others, the passage of time without marriage prospects becomes difficult. Some may try to identify a "reason" that they haven't been able to find a marriage partner, wondering if they are sufficiently attractive, fun, outgoing, or accomplished to interest potential marriage partners. Some deeply doubt potential marriage success given current divorce statistics. Some wonder if God has forgotten them or if they did something to void His love or promises.

Finding satisfaction, meaning, and happiness in life may require singles to first confront their sense of loss and then learn to live more peacefully with "what is," neither ignoring nor overemphasizing the future. They may then begin to reshape their idea of a successful life, develop a flexible support network of family and friends, and learn new life skills. Accepting rather than resisting current singleness allows a focus on what one can learn—not just what one might lose—by being single.

SEEK OUT HAPPINESS



"If you are just marking time waiting for a marriage prospect, stop waiting . . . and start moving.

Prepare yourself for life—even a single life—by education, experience, and planning. Don't wait for happiness to be thrust upon you. Seek it out in service and learning. Make a life for yourself. And trust in the Lord. Follow King Benjamin's advice to call 'on the name of the Lord daily, and [stand] steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come' (Mosiah 4:11)."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Dating versus Hanging Out," *Ensign*, June 2006, 14.



Prayerfully Assessing Circumstances

Acknowledging Pain— without Dwelling on It

LDS singles have been taught to look forward to being married and having a family as the most significant feature of adult life. Progression, happiness, temple blessings, and the very path to exaltation all seem dependent on the attainment of a marriage relationship. When years pass and marriage does not occur, some singles may feel an expanding sense of intangible loss. Family members, friends, Church leaders, and singles themselves may worry that feelings of loss are a reflection of insufficient faith or righteousness. They may also be concerned that adjusting beliefs about roles and life status will challenge testimony or reduce future prospects for marriage.

The normal sadness with which people acknowledge feelings of loss can lead to appropriate expressions



Doing Positive Things with Our Time

such as praying, journal writing, requesting priesthood blessings, and asking for empathy, validation, and support. When friends or family send messages to singles that they should “try harder,” that they aren’t doing enough to promote dating opportunities, or that they should think about happier things, singles may feel blocked rather than helped in their efforts to move forward to positive goals and interests.

There is a difference between accepting a feeling as legitimate and real and *being defined* by that feeling. Often, real feelings deepen and expand when they are minimized or ignored. When singles experience feelings of loss, if they and those close to them will acknowledge and accept the feelings as simply real, singles can more readily transcend the pain and avoid defining themselves by their marital status or their



Building a Support Network

feelings. They can then start to feel more confident, get their emotional bearings, and begin to consider healthy questions and options. For instance, singles might ask themselves, “What exactly am I feeling right now?” rather than imagining what they *might* feel if their singleness persists.

Prayerfully assessing which aspects of being single are particularly difficult at this time can keep the hurt from becoming overpowering. In this process it is important to separate what genuinely hurts at the moment from messages of fear singles may give themselves about the future. For example, when attending her sister’s wedding, a single woman may feel hurt at not having found a husband yet, but she can resist thinking she will *never* have an eternal marriage. It can be difficult to restrain those feelings, but working to do so is helpful.



Developing Skills and Talents

In some cases, singles might make things worse by interpreting what their singleness says about them. For instance, dateless evenings mean only that one is not currently seeing someone. They do not mean one is unlovable, will never have a meaningful life, or must not be very righteous. Singles and their loved ones can acknowledge painful feelings and fears as a genuine experience while moving toward more hopeful and objective thinking.

Redefining Success

In times of confusion, it is helpful to redefine and enlarge beliefs about what constitutes success or progress. Getting married is not the sole definition of success for singles. Success also includes being courageous and faithful in the face of loneliness and uncertainty, though it may not be the success singles most want. Progress is any movement toward peaceful



Cultivating Relationships

acceptance of whatever the future may hold. Working on things we can change, whether in personal or professional life, rather than concentrating and obsessing about those we can't, builds self-worth and fosters hope.

Brad never dreamed that he would finish medical school and start his practice as a single man. Not having a wife at this point in his life strongly interfered with his definition of personal success. He had almost given up on himself as a potential husband when he met and married a lovely and talented woman who had also waited a long time for marriage. Both agree that being single for so long was a challenge to their feelings of self-worth. Looking back after marriage, they each realized that success included remaining open to others, doing positive things with their energy and time, and staying connected to the Spirit despite their wait.



Working toward Goals

Shaping a Flexible Support Network

Living without a spouse does not mean single adults also have to live without emotional support, care, or help. Developing a flexible support network allows singles to value and cultivate relationships not only with parents and siblings but also with roommates, married and single friends, Church members of all ages, neighbors, and co-workers. Emotional sustenance comes from those who support us, travel with us, pray for us, and know us deeply. These friends feel much like family members because we confide in them, because they stand by us in times of trouble, and because we trust them with our feelings. Building these connections reduces isolation and provides support for working through difficult times.

Helena, 28, says, "My cousin, a neighbor, and I decided to take a trip. We found many common interests as

we discovered new places together.”

But building relationships isn't limited to special occasions or periodic trips. Helena points out that it's important to have constancy too. She adds, “I need someone in my life that I can talk to almost every day—someone who remembers when I have a test or that it's my birthday.”

Developing Coping Skills for Adult Life

For Latter-day Saint young adults adhering to the Lord's standards, physical intimacy is reserved for marriage. Postponing physical intimacy can be a challenge, but singles can make a conscious choice for chastity as the current expression of their loving nature. They need not let unfulfilled longing become bitterness, escape to pornography, or completely suppress feelings. Instead, they can focus on learning the skills of true friendship and appropriate affection. Coming to know ourselves more fully, learning to listen well, expressing ourselves honestly, working through problems constructively, developing real empathy, and resisting temptation make us not only better prospective marriage partners but also better, happier people now.

In day-to-day living we can also remind ourselves of all that is good in our lives amid that which is difficult. Making time for things we enjoy, maintaining our sense of humor, and cultivating healthy habits of exercise, good nutrition, and adequate sleep promote positive feelings. Additionally, we can replace negative feelings with



active efforts to cope, plan, and work on our concerns, interspersed with more passive times of diversion, fun, and relaxation.

Seeing What We Might Gain

Scriptural role models can increase our patience and understanding in times of darkness or uncertainty. Church members often rehearse Lehi's vision of the tree of life and its connection to the love of God. Do we remember, however, that Lehi traveled “for the space of many hours” in “a dark and dreary waste” (1 Nephi 8:7–8) before he saw the tree? Adam and Eve waited patiently for divine direction to illuminate the next part of their journey when the Garden of Eden was no longer an option (see Moses 5:4–6). One message of both stories is that God is never unaware, and, in His time and way, He answers prayers.

Our purposes in mortality are to learn through our experiences, whatever they may be, to choose good over evil and to become more like our Father in Heaven. Being single longer than we plan to be can help us accomplish these goals if we allow the Lord to work with us through our trials. As Joseph Smith faced a dark time of

waiting amid uncertainty and grief, he wrote, “Therefore, dearly beloved brethren, let us *cheerfully* do all things *that lie in our power*; and then may we stand still, *with the utmost assurance*, to see the salvation of God, and for His arm to be revealed” (D&C 123:17; emphasis added). His counsel applies to us all. ■

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

Single adults: The *Ensign* invites you to share your experiences with and insights about gospel living. You might consider writing about one of the following:

- Developing and maintaining close relationships with family members.
- Gaining from giving meaningful service.
- Overcoming loneliness.
- Finding strength in friendships.
- Living a balanced life.
- Finding fulfillment in a family-oriented Church.
- Finding answers to your challenges through scripture study.
- Coping after a significant relationship has ended.
- The blessings associated with pursuing and continuing education.
- Learning and growing from participating in institute.
- Being sustained by your testimony as you face challenges.
- Learning to be self-reliant and managing your finances.
- Other topics related to gospel living and the circumstances of being a single adult today.

For Writers' Guidelines, please see <http://ensign.lds.org>. Please e-mail your article to ensign@ldschurch.org, or send it to *Ensign* Editorial, 50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA.



One winter evening, two roommates and I were walking home after the night's activities. The conversation turned to dating (as it often did for us), and one of my roommates began to express her frustration with her dating situation. She said that she felt unattractive and ignored by men; in fact, she was certain that something was wrong with her.

She explained that she had felt this way for several days and was discouraged by her feelings of insignificance. She knew true value came from God's view of her, but she was feeling terrible anyway.

As the other roommate and I listened, we wanted to comfort her, yet we were unsure how to do so. She was beautiful, kind, and intelligent, and she was a joy to be around. It seemed unreasonable for her to feel the way she did, yet we understood. After all, both of us had felt rejected at one time or another.

We reached our apartment, and I told her about some of my own dating experiences. We discussed that not all relationships work out and that not every person is looking for the same thing in a companion. These reassurances seemed to help some, but she confided that her greatest frustration was that she cared too much about how others perceived her.

Our other roommate sat quietly for a moment and then did something I will never forget. Pulling her scriptures off

of her bedside stand, she said, "There's a scripture that I have always found helpful."

Turning to Mosiah 3:19, she read, "For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father."

Immediately the Spirit filled the room—and our hearts.

"This scripture gives us the very framework of how to change," she continued. "You shouldn't feel disheartened for feeling the way you do. That is one

of the effects of the Fall of Adam. We are all human. But like this scripture says, we have the Atonement of Jesus Christ and can change if we submit our hearts to the Savior."

As well intended as my advice had been, it didn't have the power that this scripture did. My friend had provided comfort by turning to the words of the Lord. I treasure her reminder that one of the greatest comforts we can give or receive will always be the scriptures. ■

Finding Comfort in King Benjamin's Counsel

BY AMANDA LESUEUR



MAKING THE MOST OF OUR SINGLE YEARS

BY RUSSELL STEVENSON

These five principles can help make dating a rewarding process.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN LUKE; NUMERICAL OBJECTS © GETTY IMAGES AND BY STAFF

From time to time, single life makes me feel like a fish in a tank watching the married world go by. Occasionally, well-meaning acquaintances might tap on the glass with a not-so-subtle question about my dating status. Others offer kindhearted but remarkably vague encouragement: “Don’t worry. If you just keep moving forward, someday . . .”

I readily admit that dating can bring emotional gray hairs to some of the most vibrant young single adults. Many of us have been part of conversations in which the topic of dating—even when addressed seriously—is met with a chuckle, a sigh of weariness, or a cynical remark. But it does not need to be that way. I certainly don’t have all the answers to the challenges of dating in young single adulthood, but these five principles have helped me make the most of this stage of my life.

Communicate clearly. Clear, sincere communication is key in any quality relationship. Becoming aware of my communication style has helped me improve my interactions with other people. Straightforward communication might include good eye contact, real interest in the other person, courtesy, and genuine smiles.

1 For instance, in addition to thanking a date at the end of an evening, an acquaintance of mine, Amanda, also thanks him the day *after* they go out. Because this is not a time when gratitude is socially obligatory, she clearly lets her date know she enjoyed their time together. I have found that when I make clear communication a priority, I can better

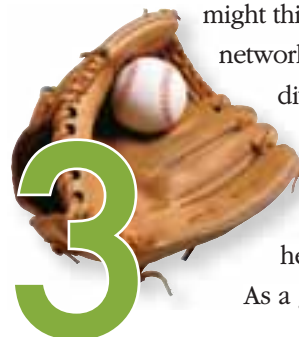
understand my date—or whomever I’m with—and more effectively build our relationship.

2 **Don’t take yourself too seriously.** Early on in their relationship, my parents met at the library to study together. While they were there, my father fell asleep. My mother promptly left the library without waking him. Fortunately for my siblings and me, our mother didn’t believe that disastrous

dates are indicative of the future or that relationships need always resemble a sparkling Hollywood romance. Thank heavens for a patient mother and a determined father.

I’ve known some people who tend to believe that the first date is a forecast for eternity. If the date is less than heavenly, they think either that they have failed or that their date did. What I’ve learned, however, is that most dates come and go without incident. When a bad date *does* happen, a hearty laugh with close friends can be top-notch medicine for the 24-hour dating flu. I am grateful for friends and family members who have reminded me that a failed date—or even a series of them—does not undermine my value as a human being and child of God.

3 **Pursue a variety of activities.** While some young adults might think that pursuing hobbies and networking in social circles merely divert attention from purposeful dating, these activities can be indispensable in striking a proper life balance as well as helping us meet other people. As a graduate student in history,



I have come to value variety in activities even more, given the intensity of study required. I have made an effort to attend as many ward activities as possible. In the past, I have played Frisbee weekly—not because I’m particularly good at it but because I enjoy good relationships with good people in wholesome activities.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled a group of young single adults to be a quality person “no matter what happened yesterday or what awaits . . . tomorrow.”¹ While developing hobbies and talents is not often a part of “active dating time,” these activities provide some of our best resources for increasing our social interactions and enhancing the qualities about us that could make us attractive as a potential marriage partner.



Be patient. Upon returning from my mission, I told myself that if I were not married within two years, I would at least be dating someone seriously. I might as well have picked a day on the calendar and drawn a broken heart on it! I soon realized that for me, setting a timetable for marriage meant setting a timetable for disappointment. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “The timing of marriage is perhaps the best example of an extremely important event in our lives that is almost impossible to plan.”²

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) explained: “Sometimes we pound on the vault door for something we want very much, in faith, in reasonable righteousness, and wonder why the door does not open. . . . Our rejected petitions tell us not only much about ourselves, but also much about our flawless Father.”³

Although having patience is sometimes difficult, I have found it helpful to look to the Lord as my adviser. He knows the parts to His grand design far better than I do.

5 Rely on the Atonement. Some episodes in the dating process are painful. When faced with these sometimes heart-wrenching realities, we might be tempted to succumb to cynicism. During one particularly acute moment of soul-searching, I wondered if I really had a place within the dating system. At the same time, I had been reading John 6:35, where Christ taught, “I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” The masses ridiculed this idea.



By viewing our dating experiences—good and bad—through an optimistic lens and by maintaining hope in the Savior, we can find happiness regardless of our situation.

Similarly, I scoffed at the idea of marriage because of some painful experiences I had recently faced.

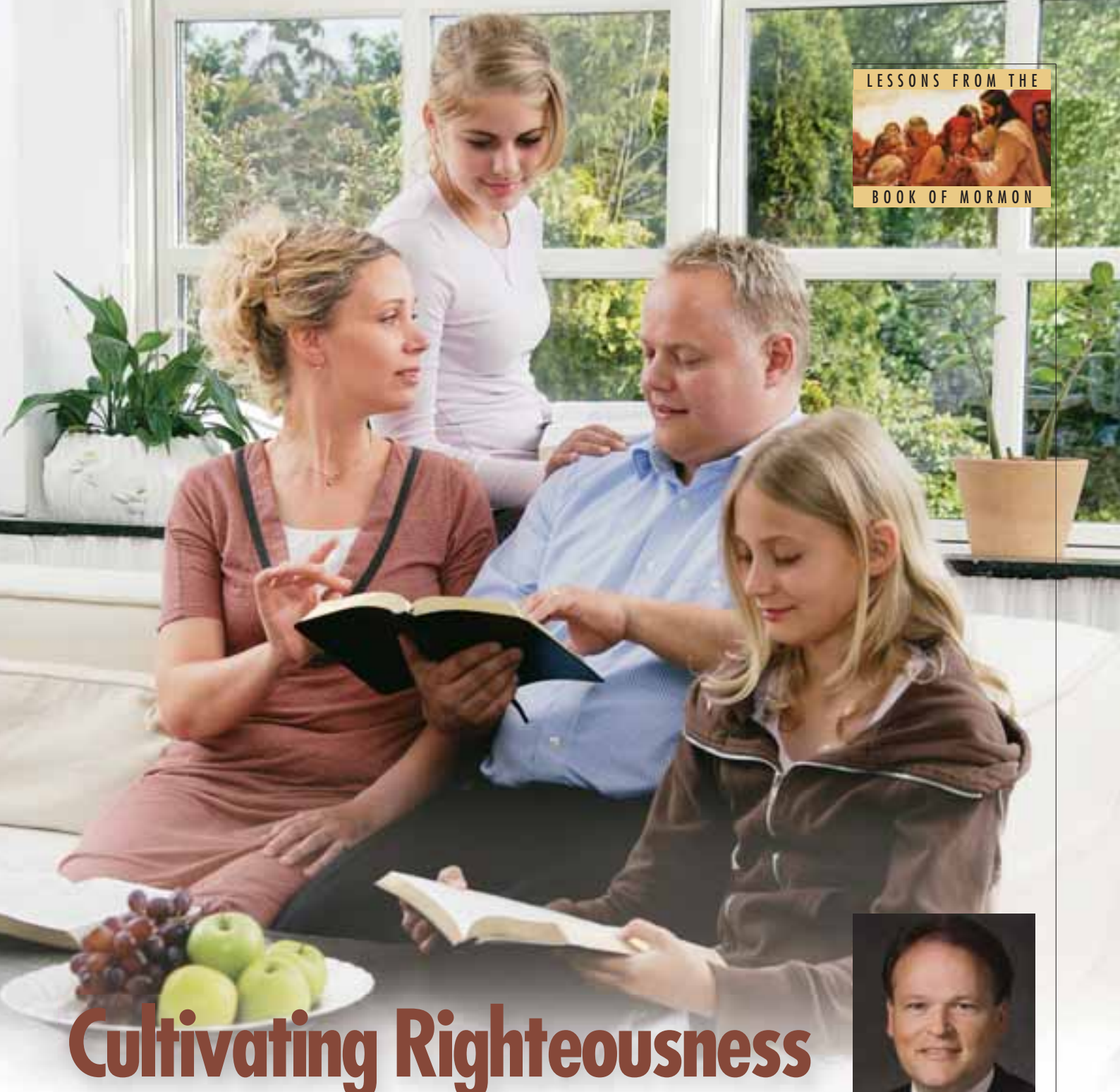
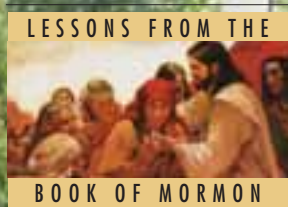
As I continued reading, Christ’s question to the Twelve seemed to echo within me: “Will ye also go away?” (John 6:67). I soon discovered that my discouragement towards dating was not far removed from outright despair. I realized that my hope needed to be in the Savior, not in the dating system. The Lord, through His prophets, has promised that Latter-day Saints who remain faithful in all things—including in working toward an eternal family—will receive all the blessings of exaltation.

These five principles have given me guidance and helped me keep perspective throughout the inconveniences and ironies that often mark mortality. They have also helped me realize that even when a relationship doesn’t result in marriage, dating can still be a rewarding process that helps us grow. By viewing our

experiences through these lenses and by maintaining hope in the Savior, we can find happiness regardless of our situation. After all, we may say, as Peter did, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). ■

NOTES

1. Marvin J. Ashton, “Be a Quality Person,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1993, 65.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “Timing,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2003, 15.
3. Neal A. Maxwell, “Insights from My Life,” in *1976 Devotional Speeches of the Year* (1977), 200.



Cultivating Righteousness

BY ELDER MARCUS B. NASH
Of the Seventy

We are commanded to “seek . . . first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (3 Nephi 13:33). Nephi saw our day and prophesied that the covenant people of the Lord would prevail because “they were armed with righteousness

and with the power of God in great glory” (1 Nephi 14:14; see also 1 Nephi 22:17–28). This description of our day indicates a connection between righteousness and the manifestation of God’s power in our lives. Because the righteous are favored of God (see 1 Nephi 17:35) and are nourished, strengthened, and given means by Him to accomplish His will



As we live righteously and walk humbly, the love of God will refresh our souls and increase our ability to endure to the end.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAN FRIS © HENRIK ALS



LEHIS VISION OF THE TREE OF LIFE, BY ROBIN LUCH

(see 1 Nephi 17:3), we should earnestly strive to cultivate righteousness.

Alma, chapter 60, recounts a period of war, trial, and iniquity not unlike our day. Captain Moroni and his armies, weakened by the iniquity of their nation, had suffered great loss. Knowing that they would not triumph—or even survive—without the Lord’s sustaining power, Moroni wrote Pahoran, the chief judge, and urged him to do what was necessary for the Nephites to be sustained by the Lord.

Moroni reminded Pahoran that “the inward vessel shall be cleansed first, and then shall the outer vessel be cleansed also” (v. 23) and urged him to “make use of the means which the Lord has provided for us . . . to be up and doing” (vv. 21, 24). When Pahoran requested assistance to accomplish these tasks, Moroni quickly came to his aid.

In order to succeed in any meaningful endeavor, we too must (1) cleanse the inner vessels of our homes and lives and (2) “be up and doing” in making use of the means provided to us by the Lord. As we do so, we will be armed with righteousness and with the power of God.

Cleanse the Inner Vessel

The process of cleansing ourselves includes being careful (1) to “touch not . . . the unclean thing” (Moroni 10:30), which suggests that we avoid any contact with filth and sin, including that in music, in the media, and on the Internet and (2) to “strip [ourselves] of all uncleanness” (Mormon 9:28), which means we must repent of any sins we have committed. These phrases are instructive: it is preferable and easier to “touch not” the filth, and it is much more painful and difficult to “strip” it from us once we have touched it. Regardless, we must be clean, and as we repent of all our sins and live the gospel, we will be cleansed through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

We learn that praying, tasting the fruit of God’s love, seeking to unite our family in gospel living, and holding to the word of God are important priorities in living the gospel and cultivating righteousness.

Be Up and Doing

The means the Lord has given us to address today’s challenges is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and only through the Atonement of Christ and by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel can we be saved. The Lord’s teachings when he visited the Nephites suggest five basic elements of these laws and ordinances (see 3 Nephi 27:13–22).

First, we understand that we are children of God and will one day, through the Resurrection of Christ, stand before the Savior to be judged of our works, whether they be good or evil. This sobering truth should lend perspective to our daily decisions.

Second, we exercise faith in Christ unto the repentance of all our sins. We must believe and trust in His atoning sacrifice sufficiently to forsake our sins, changing our thoughts, feelings, and conduct to conform to His standards. We will do so when we have a witness through the Spirit that living the standards of the gospel will bring us the happiness we desire and that not living them will bring us misery.¹

Third, we receive all the ordinances of the gospel, beginning with baptism and continuing through the temple ordinances. Each gospel ordinance is connected to covenants that put our lives in order so the power of godliness may



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Consider having each family member draw an outline of your home. Read the section “The Basis of a Righteous Life”; then draw pictures inside the home portraying the activities described. Discuss how these activities increase our capacity to more completely live the gospel.

2. For families with young children, put a wrapped piece of candy just beyond the reach of each child. Have them use their resources to try to get it. Share the story of Captain Moroni asking for help from Pahoran. Discuss how to “make use of the means which the Lord has provided for us . . . to be up and doing” (Alma 60: 21, 24). Conclude by reading the last paragraph of the article.

vessel of society and of the Lord’s church] *is the basis of a righteous life*, and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions in carrying forward [parents’] God-given responsibility” to teach children the gospel. In this letter, parents and children are instructed “to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities.”² Faithful adherence to these priorities will increase the capacity of parents and children to more completely live the gospel.

be manifest (see D&C 84:20–21). As we endure in keeping these covenants and obeying God’s commandments, He fulfills His promises and fills us with His Spirit.

Fourth, from the time of our confirmation following baptism, we receive the Holy Ghost. Speaking to our mind and heart, the Holy Ghost testifies of truth (see D&C 50:14; John 16:13); guides us in wisdom’s paths that we may be blessed, prospered, and preserved (see Mosiah 2:36); and brings the cleansing, healing, and sanctifying power of the Atonement into our lives. Hence, the companionship of the Holy Ghost is integral to our being strengthened by the Lord.

Fifth, we strive to remember the Savior always and follow His example in all things. As we do these things, we become guiltless and spotless.

The power of the gospel is available to the righteous, those who in their albeit imperfect way are nevertheless “up and doing” in living the gospel. Lehi is a good example. When he walked in vision through a dark and dreary waste, he prayed unto the Lord. He then saw “a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make one happy” (1 Nephi 8:10). When he partook of the fruit, he found it to be “most sweet” (1 Nephi 8:11); indeed, it filled his soul with joy. With the taste fresh on his lips, he desired that his family join him in partaking of the fruit. Then he noted a rod of iron that, if grasped continually, would lead those seeking the fruit to the tree (see 1 Nephi 8:12–19). Thus we learn that praying, tasting the fruit of God’s love, seeking to unite our family in gospel living, and holding to the word of God are important priorities in living the gospel and cultivating righteousness (see 1 Nephi 11:21–25).

The Basis of a Righteous Life

In 1999 Church members received a letter from the First Presidency outlining similar priorities: “The home [this inner

Tasting the Pure Love of Christ

Finally, a key principle: the power to endure in living righteously comes as we receive the love of God, which is “most joyous to the soul” (1 Nephi 11:22–23). We experience His love as we yield our hearts to Him (see Helaman 3:35), place the affection of our hearts on Him forever (see Alma 37:36), and love Him with all of our heart, might, mind, and strength (see Moroni 10:32). This love—charity—will be bestowed upon all who are “true followers” of Jesus Christ (Moroni 7:48; see also vv. 45–47). As we live righteously and walk humbly, the love of God will refresh our souls as living water in a parched desert and fuel our ability to endure to the end.

Because Captain Moroni and Pahoran cleansed “the inner vessel” and were “up and doing” in using the means provided by the Lord, they and their people were armed with righteousness and the Spirit and power of God. As a result, they triumphed and established peace in the land. The Lord invites each of us to follow this pattern of righteousness so that we may likewise be blessed, preserved, and strengthened by a loving, merciful Father in Heaven. ■

NOTES

1. See Henry B. Eyring, “Standards of Worthiness,” *First Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 11, 2003, 12; see also Alma 5:35–36.
2. First Presidency letter, Feb. 11, 1999; emphasis added; see *Ensign*, June 1999, 80.

By Their Fruits

BY SANDI DAVIS

I wanted so much to know what God was really like and to find His church.

I began searching for God's church when I was a child. Mother and I lived with my grandparents, Mama and Papa, in the deep South. My parents had separated when I was very young, and my mother contracted polio when I was three. She could no longer walk and was in and out of hospitals throughout my childhood. Mama, my grandmother, became a mother to me.

Although my grandparents took me to the church they attended each Sunday, prayer was not a part of our home. The only time a family member prayed aloud was at Thanksgiving dinner, when one of my uncles asked a blessing on the food. Because I had not been taught that a loving Father in Heaven can hear even a child's prayer, many nights I gazed out my bedroom window waiting for the first star of the night so I could wish on it that my mother would be able to walk again.

Our church was a small white frame building located on a narrow dirt road that ran for miles through farmland. Mama and Papa discussed how high the cotton had grown since the previous week as we crept along on our way to church. In the winter the church was kept warm with propane-fueled stoves, and in the summer we kept cool with cardboard fans that had pictures of Jesus or angels on them.

When I was nine, my father took me to live with him. We rarely went to church, but my dad had studied to become a minister earlier in his life and had shelves of religious materials. One summer when I was 14, instead of going to my grandparents' house as I usually did, I

ILLUSTRATION BY GREG THORKEISON; FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR



Sister Davis's photos showing her with her husband (above) and with her mother (right), her missionary daughter (right center), her daughter's family (far right), and her extended family (upper right).

stayed at Dad's and read every piece of religious literature he had. Throughout my teenage years, I attended revivals and other religious services. I wanted so much to know what God was really like and find His church. I continued to read my Bible and began to pay tithing on the money I earned from babysitting.

One night I was reading some church literature my dad had received in the mail, and I came across an invitation to pray. Even though I had often attended church services, I had never prayed. I decided I would do it. As I knelt in my room, I felt a strong feeling not to join that church. I had never had a feeling like that before, and it frightened me. I jumped up from my knees and decided to abandon my search for God's true church.

Recognizing an Inward Glow

After I was married and had two small children, I worked as a secretary for a man who spoke the truth and was courteous and happy. He seemed to have an inward glow that was quite visible to me. He told me that he attended The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Since I desired to take our children to a church that would offer them something substantial, I asked him to tell me about his religion.

A few days later, he invited my husband and me to his house to meet his family. At the end of the evening, he called his family together for prayer and asked if my husband and I would join them. Because of my negative experience with prayer many years before, I was reluctant. Imagine my astonishment when my boss called on his four-year-old daughter to say the prayer! Years earlier I had decided that prayer was only for clergymen, but this little girl's sweet communication with God showed me that wasn't true.

I began taking the missionary discussions in this family's home. One night the missionaries showed me a filmstrip. Just a couple of minutes into the film, I heard a voice say, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." The voice was so clear that it startled me. I looked around the room to see who had spoken. Everyone was



watching the film; evidently no one had spoken. Then I heard again, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." I looked at each person in the room and tried with all my might to find something wrong with them. But I could find no "bad fruit" among them. I didn't mention this experience to anyone that night but reflected upon it frequently in the days that followed. Could this church be what I had been searching for all these years?

Finding the Truth

Soon the missionaries asked me to be baptized, and I knew with all my heart that it was the right thing to do. Though we were living several hundred miles from Mama, I couldn't wait to tell her what I had found. When we were finally able to make the trip, I joyfully told her that I had found God's true church. I thought she would be happy and want to know more. But she wouldn't speak to me or even look at me. Though I continued to love her, things were never quite the same between us.

Thirty-three years have passed since my baptism day. Father in Heaven has loved me sweetly, sustained me through trials, and given me many reasons to rejoice. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," the Holy Ghost told me that day. I have seen the fruits of living the gospel in my life. Temple sealings have blessed our family. I thank my Father in Heaven as I watch my nine grandchildren give talks in Primary and hear them pray in our family. I truly found a church that had something substantial to offer the little ones.

The gospel continues to bless our lives. We have performed temple ordinances for thousands of our ancestors. We have a daughter who has served a mission, teaching others who were searching for the truth as I searched many years ago. My reasons to rejoice keep multiplying! ■



MODESTY

Reverence for the Lord

BY ELDER ROBERT D. HALES

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

As the General Authorities and auxiliary Church leaders travel across the earth, it is apparent to us that the world is becoming increasingly casual and informal. This is manifested in many ways but particularly in the way people dress. This is also true among some members of the Church.

Such informality may come in part because of indifference. It may come from a lack of understanding or a lack of proper example. We are now two to three generations into wearing casual apparel, and we may not all have had good parental examples of appropriate and modest dress. Popular culture generally has not provided good examples either. The declining trend may also come in part because it is difficult to buy modest attire in today's market.

It is with these observations and these challenges in mind that I wish to emphasize the need for reverence for our Heavenly Father and for keeping the covenants we have made with Him, particularly as relating to modesty and appropriate dress.

The Principle of Modesty

Some Latter-day Saints may feel that modesty is a tradition of the Church or that it has

evolved from conservative, puritanical behavior. Modesty is not just cultural. Modesty is a gospel principle that applies to people of all cultures and ages. In fact, modesty is fundamental to being worthy of the Spirit. To be modest is to be humble, and being humble invites the Spirit to be with us.

Of course, modesty is not new. It was taught to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. "Unto Adam . . . and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21; see also Moses 4:27). Like Adam and Eve, we have been taught that our bodies are formed in the likeness of God and are therefore sacred.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

". . . The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

Our bodies are the temples of our spirits. Additionally, our bodies are the means by which we can bring souls from the presence of God to their mortal state. When we recognize our bodies as the gifts they are and when we understand the missions they help us fulfill, we protect and honor them by how we act and dress.

In everyday living, immodest clothing such



When we know who we are—children of God—and understand that our outward appearance affects our inward spirituality and ultimately our behavior, we show respect for God, for ourselves, and for those around us by being modest in dress and behavior.

as short shorts, miniskirts, tight clothing, shirts that do not cover the stomach, and other revealing attire are not appropriate. Men and women—including young men and young women—should wear clothing that covers the shoulder and avoid clothing that is low cut in the front or back or revealing in any other manner. Tight pants, tight shirts, excessively baggy clothing, wrinkled apparel, and unkempt hair are not appropriate. All should avoid extremes in clothing, hairstyle, and other aspects of appearance. We should always be neat and clean, avoiding sloppiness or inappropriate casualness.¹

Modesty is at the center of being pure and chaste, both in thought and deed. Thus, because it guides and influences our thoughts, behavior, and decisions, modesty is at the core of our character. Our clothing is more than just covering for our bodies; it reflects who we are and what we want to be, both here in mortality and in the eternities that will follow.

Modesty in Dress for Church Meetings

When we attend a Church meeting, our purpose is to worship our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ. Our clothing should show our reverence for Them. We do not dress to attract attention to ourselves, thus distracting others and causing the Spirit to depart.

It is the responsibility of parents to teach their children how to dress and prepare for worshipping in the houses of the Lord. Mothers and fathers can teach their children by taking special care to dress in such a way as to show modesty and reverence in their own appearance and behavior.

When I was a boy, my mother taught me that I should wear my “Sunday best”—in other words, my best attire—to church. What happens in your home as you are preparing to come to church? Is there a moment before you



Show respect for the Lord and for yourself by dressing appropriately for Church meetings and activities.

leave your home when you pause to look at yourself in a mirror or have a member of the family observe how you look?

Show respect for the Lord and for yourself by dressing appropriately for Church meetings and activities, whether they are on Sunday or during the week. If you are not sure what is appropriate, ask your leaders for guidance.

Modesty in Dress for Temple Attendance

Imagine yourself approaching the temple ready to enter the house of the Lord. In your mind’s eye, are you wearing flip-flops, blue jeans, and a T-shirt with your hair casually unkempt? Of course not. But is it appropriate to



How we dress portrays whether we have proper respect for temple ordinances and eternal covenants and whether we are preparing ourselves to receive them.

wear casual clothes of *any* kind to the temple? If you are coming to the Lord's house, shouldn't you be wearing your Sunday best?

The next time you approach the temple, pause to look at the temple grounds. Have you ever considered why the temple is surrounded by beautiful plants, reflecting pools, and architecture? They give an outward presence and feeling that prepares the patron for the sacred ordinances that await inside the temple. Even if a temple is in the center of a large city, the architecture outside separates the building from surrounding structures.

Our clothing is equally important. It is the "landscaping" for presenting our bodies as temples. Just as the temple grounds portray the sacredness and reverence for what

takes place inside the temple, our clothing portrays the beauty and purity of our inner selves. How we dress portrays whether we have proper respect for temple ordinances and eternal covenants and whether we are preparing ourselves to receive them.

In the classic fairy tale, Cinderella wore a magnificent gown to the royal ball. Even her slippers reflected the significance of the evening! It would have been unthinkable for her to come in her working clothes. In fact, no one arrived at the ball dressed in inappropriate, casual clothing. They were all elegantly dressed for the occasion.

There will be no more significant occasion in your life than your wedding day. Your marriage will be one of the *most sacred* events of your life, and hopefully it will take place in the holy temple—Heavenly Father's *most sacred* edifice here on earth. If you truly understood the nature of the covenants that you will be making, you would reflect that in your dress. Brides, you would choose a white temple dress with a bodice and sleeves that are appropriate for the wearing of temple garments. You would do this because of the endowment ceremony and covenants you took upon yourself in preparation for your sealing ceremony. Grooms, your clothing and appearance would be modest and clean. You would not wear a rumpled shirt or slouchy pants in the temple.

When that day comes for you, you will make holy covenants with Heavenly Father. You will want to look your very best as you reverently kneel at an altar before God.

Parents, just as Cinderella's fairy godmother helped prepare her, you can help prepare your sons and daughters. Help them understand the significance of the covenants they will make. Honoring our covenants, starting with baptism, affects who we are and what we do, including the kinds of things we say, the music we listen to, and the clothing we wear. When we make and keep covenants, we are coming out of the world and into the kingdom of God. Our appearance should reflect that.

Before you attend the temple, whether it is to be married, to receive the endowment, or to perform work for the dead, pause for a moment and ask yourself these questions:

“If the Lord were to be at the temple today, how would I dress? How would I want to present myself to Him?” Of course, the answer is clear. You would want to look and feel your best.

Ask yourself the same questions about attending church on Sunday at your local meetinghouse. There you will renew your baptismal covenants through partaking of the sacrament. Remember, you are coming to a house of the Lord that has been dedicated for worshipping Him.

Outward Appearance— the Messages We Send

Imagine that you are watching a play. An actor comes on stage dressed as a clown but starts playing the serious part of the lead. You might react by thinking that this is inappropriate—there must be some mistake in the costuming or casting.

Now think of how inappropriate it is to go out into the world or come to church dressed in clothes that do not represent who you really are in spirit. Our outward appearance and behavior give a message. What message are we sending? Does it reflect that we are children of God? When we go to church or the temple, it is important that we dress to demonstrate that we are prepared to worship and to indicate that we are mentally and spiritually ready to invite the Spirit to be with us always.



Years ago, as a father and bishop in the Church, I could not understand the rationale of youth who dressed in wild colors and provocative fashions to show their “in your face” independence from modest, conservative dress codes and traditions. Then I would observe that, ironically, the rigid compliance of these youth to their bizarre dress codes required far greater obedience and conformity to peer-group pressures than that desired by society as a whole.

When we dress for attention, we are not inviting the Spirit to be with us. We act differently when we are dressed for the world’s attention. Moreover, what we wear will influence the behavior of others toward us.

Consider why missionaries dress conservatively in a skirt and blouse or in a suit with a white shirt and tie. How might someone respond if the missionary had unkempt hair and if he or she were dressed in blue jeans, flip-flops, and a T-shirt with a tawdry printed message? That person might ask, “Is this a representative of God?” Why would that person want to

engage in a serious conversation about the purpose of life or the Restoration of the gospel with such a missionary?

Of course we don’t need to dress like missionaries all of the time. There are certainly times when modest casual clothing is appropriate. The point is this: How we dress affects

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how people react to us. It also demonstrates where our heart and spirit really desire to be.

How we feel on the inside shows on the outside. We show love and respect for ourselves and others by our attitude, speech, and dress. We show love and respect for Church leaders and ward or branch members by speaking, dressing, and behaving in a manner that does not bring inappropriate attention to ourselves. We show love and respect for friends and associates when our language, dress, and behavior are not provocative or unduly casual. And we show love and respect to the Lord through humble dress and behavior. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

Putting on “the Whole Armor”

When we know who we are—children of God—and understand that our outward appearance affects our inward spirituality and ultimately our behavior, we show respect for God, for ourselves, and for those around us by being modest in dress and behavior.

My father, who was an artist, helped me understand this concept when I was a boy. He drew me a picture of a knight in armor and labeled the critical elements of “the whole armor of God” as described in the scriptures (see Ephesians 6:11–17; D&C 27:15–18). That picture hung in my bedroom and became a reminder of what we need to do to remain

true and faithful to gospel principles.

Just as we are to “put on” the armor of God, we are to “put on” our clothes as protection for us and others. Clothing ourselves with modest dress and modest actions—mercy, kindness, humility, patience, and charity—will invite the companionship of the Spirit and will positively affect those around us (see Colossians 3:12, 14).

Are we determined to be Saints in the kingdom of God, or are we more comfortable in the ways of the world? Ultimately, how we dress will greatly influence our obedience to commandments and devotion to covenants. Dressing modestly will guide our attitudes and behavior as we conduct our daily lives. In time our dress may even determine who our friends and associates may be, thus influencing whether we live worthy of enjoying the blessings of happiness in this world and for eternity.

It is my fervent prayer that we will hold to our covenants and be modest in our dress and behavior as we attend church, visit the temple, and go about our daily lives. As we

do so, we will show respect for ourselves, our parents, our Church leaders, and others, and we will show reverence to our Heavenly Father and invite the Spirit to be with us always. ■

NOTE

1. See *For the Strength of Youth: Fulfilling Our Duty to God* (2001), “Dress and Appearance.”



We show love and respect to the Lord through humble dress and behavior.



The Whole Armor of God

The “helmet of salvation” guards our reasoning, intellect, and thoughts.

The “breastplate of righteousness” helps us to have the Spirit with us always, guarding our heart and soul.

Having our “loins girt about with truth” gives us the foundation to build faith and develop our testimony.

The “sword of the Spirit” is the word of God to pierce the darkness so that we may have light and truth to guide our way in life.

The “shield of faith” helps us withstand the fiery darts of the adversary.

Having our “feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” by reading and studying the scriptures helps us be obedient to the laws, ordinances, commandments, and covenants of God.

Elder Robert D. Hales

“And Thus We See”



Flight

Lehi left “the land of his inheritance . . . and took nothing with him, save it were his family, . . . and departed into the wilderness” (1 Nephi 2:4).



Treasures in Exchange for the Plates of Brass

Lehi’s sons asked Laban “that he would give unto [them] the . . . plates of brass, for . . . all [their] precious things,” but Laban refused (1 Nephi 3:24).

Lessons learned from stories in the Book of Mormon are sometimes clearly stated after the words “and thus we see.” For example, speaking of the years of wandering in the wilderness after fleeing from Jerusalem with his family, Nephi wrote:

“We did travel and wade through much affliction in the wilderness. . . .”

“And so great were the blessings of the Lord upon us, that while we did live upon raw meat in the wilderness, our women . . . were strong, yea, even like unto the men. . . .”

“And thus we see that the commandments of God must be fulfilled. And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God he doth nourish them, and strengthen them” (1 Nephi 17:1–3).

Yet other lessons learned from the Book of Mormon may be more subtly taught. Following is artwork painted by Latter-day Saint artist Minerva Teichert, who often depicted stories found in the Book of Mormon. As you turn to the scriptures for the full account of each story, see if you can identify the powerful lesson each story teaches.

Right: Look to Your Children

When Christ visited the Nephites, “he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, . . . and the angels did minister unto them” (3 Nephi 17:21, 24).





Above: Ammon Saves the King's Flocks
After Lamanites scattered the king's flocks, "Ammon stood forth and began to cast stones at them with his sling; yea, with mighty power" (Alma 17:36).



Right: Escape of King Limhi and His People
To escape from Lamanite bondage, King Limhi sent wine to the Lamanites. Then he and his people departed by night (see Mosiah 22:10-11).

Left: Trial of Abinadi

Abinadi “spake with power and authority from God”; nevertheless, “the king commanded that . . . [Abinadi] should be put to death” (Mosiah 13:6, 17:1).



Below left: Treachery of Amalickiah

Amalickiah arranged for the king’s death, lied to the queen, “and took her unto him to wife; and thus by his fraud . . . he obtained the kingdom” (Alma 47:35).



Below: The Earthquake

Alma the Younger and Amulek cried unto God in prison for deliverance “and the earth shook mightily, and the walls of the prison . . . fell to the earth,” and those “who smote upon Alma and Amulek, were slain by the fall thereof” (Alma 14: 27).



Right: The Law on the Plates of Brass

Nephi returns with the plates of brass, knowing that the law was engraven upon them and would prevent a nation from perishing in unbelief (see 1 Nephi 4:16, 13).

Samuel H. Smith

Faithful Brother of Joseph and Hyrum

BY LARENE PORTER GAUNT Church Magazines
AND ROBERT A. SMITH President of the Samuel H. Smith Foundation

Samuel's faithful devotion to the gospel, his loyalty to family, and his physical strength made him an invaluable support to the early Church. This year marks the 200th anniversary of his birth.



Who was Samuel H. Smith? His younger brother Don Carlos said of him, “He is as faithful as the sun!”¹

His mother, Lucy Mack Smith, said that none of her sons had a greater gift of healing than Samuel.² When she called on her husband and sons in 1835 for a priesthood blessing, Samuel was voice as they blessed Lucy to be healed from an eye inflammation that had caused partial blindness. “When they took their hands off my head,” wrote Lucy, “I opened my eyes and read two lines in the Book of Mormon.”³

His daughter Mary revealed another dimension of Samuel when she wrote, “My father was an industrious, hard-working man, who never shirked any task. While working on the farm, he worked every day and part of every moonlight night.”⁴

These accounts, written by three people who knew and loved Samuel, help us see into his life and character. Samuel's charge, though temporal in many ways, was essential, and Samuel embraced it willingly. He became

the hands that helped his father care for the farm when his prophet-brother Joseph, with Hyrum at his side, was working to restore the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It was Samuel who helped chop the wood, plow the land, and harvest the crops in 1829 so that Joseph was free to translate the gold plates. It was Samuel who, as an early missionary during the years 1831–32, walked more than 4,000 miles through the

Midwest and New England distributing copies of the Book of Mormon. It was Samuel who often helped his parents move as Joseph led the Saints from Ohio to Missouri to Illinois. And, in the end, it was Samuel who helped load the bodies of his martyred brothers, Joseph and Hyrum, into the wagons that carried them to Nauvoo. This was the pattern of Samuel's life.

Joseph Smith Sr., a noble and loving father and the Church's first patriarch, alluded to this pattern in a blessing to Samuel when he said, “Thou hast been faithful in all thy days, and ministered comfort to thy father's family. . . . Thou hast labored much and toiled hard. . . . The just shall rise up and call thee a perfect man.”⁵

Above: The Smith log home in Manchester Township, New York. Right: The three Smith brothers who died as a result of the events on June 27, 1844, in Carthage, Illinois—Hyrum, Joseph, and Samuel.





Above: Regular family prayer and scripture study were an important part of life in the Smith home.

Right: In June 1829, Samuel became one of the Eight Witnesses who bore written testimony of the reality of the gold plates.

Sixth in a Family of Eleven

Samuel was born on March 13, 1808, in Tunbridge, Vermont, into the righteous but struggling farm family of Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith.⁶ He likely understood little of the series of crop failures that caused his family to leave Vermont in 1816 and move to Palmyra, New York, where they arrived “destitute of friends, home, or employment.”⁷ Nevertheless, Samuel’s father worked hard and eventually bought 100 acres of land two miles south of Palmyra, in Manchester Township. Perhaps Samuel even helped his father and older brothers build the “snug, comfortable though humble” log cabin into which the family moved in the fall of 1818.⁸

Here, as Samuel grew up, he learned to work hard from his father and brothers by clearing timber-covered land for farming; helping with the plowing, planting, and harvesting; and gathering sap from hundreds of sugar maple trees to make molasses.

Samuel certainly became aware of the religious fervor that dominated upstate

New York, since his family sold food from a cart at various religious revivals. This religious excitement affected the Smith family. Fourteen-year-old Joseph struggled to know which church to join. But after reading James 1:5, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God,” Joseph knew what he must do. One beautiful morning in the spring of 1820, Joseph went into a grove of trees and prayed to know which church to join. God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to him, and Christ told him not to join any of the churches. (See Joseph Smith—History 1:5–20.) Joseph’s family accepted his account of the First Vision and supported him in his work of translating the gold plates that would become the Book of Mormon.

Regular family prayer and scripture study were a part of life in the Smith family. Samuel’s brother William wrote, “I well remember father used to carry his spectacles in his vest pocket, and when we boys saw him feel for his specs, we knew that was a signal to get ready for prayer.”⁹

During this time, when Samuel and his siblings gathered for family prayers, they would listen to Joseph “describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent, their dress, their manner of traveling, [and] the animals which they rode.” These family devotionals brought “the sweetest union and happiness” into the Smith home and “tranquility reigned.”¹⁰ But outside of the Smith home, as ministers and neighbors learned of Joseph’s visions, many treated the Smiths with “contempt” and “a great deal of prejudice” (Joseph Smith—History 1:21–22).

The Third Person Baptized

By September 1827, Samuel was 19 years old, six feet tall, and endowed with “great strength, far exceeding that of ordinary men, enabl[ing] him to do an unusual amount of work.”¹¹

This was the month Joseph received the plates from their burial place in the Hill Cumorah. Immediately, enemies tried to steal them. To protect the plates, Joseph and his wife, Emma, moved to Harmony, Pennsylvania, and lived near Emma’s parents.

Samuel made the 135-mile trip between Palmyra and Harmony numerous times. On one of these visits, Samuel served temporarily as scribe for Joseph.¹² In early April 1829 Samuel brought school-teacher Oliver Cowdery from Palmyra, and Oliver became Joseph’s full-time scribe.

During Samuel’s visits, Joseph continued to teach him the gospel; Samuel “was not, however, very easily persuaded of these things.” So in May 1829 he did as Joseph had done and retired to the woods to pray. After fervent prayer, he “obtained revelation” that Joseph’s teachings were true. Oliver Cowdery, who had been baptized along with Joseph Smith on May 15, baptized Samuel on May 25.¹³

After Joseph finished translating the Book of Mormon in June 1829, Samuel became one of the Eight Witnesses in Palmyra who bore written testimony of the plates, saying, “We did handle [them] with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon.”¹⁴

After the Book of Mormon was published in early 1830, the Church was organized in Fayette, New York, on April 6. Samuel was among the six charter members. He was also ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood.

Missions and Marriage

When Samuel asked how he could best serve in the newly organized church, his answer came in a revelation: “Thy calling is to exhortation, and to strengthen the church; and thou are not as yet called to preach before the world” (D&C 23:4).

Two months later the Prophet called his younger brother to serve as a missionary to neighboring villages (see page 48).

As a result of the work of Samuel and others, future Church leaders Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball

came in contact with copies of the Book of Mormon left by Samuel and were baptized.

While still on his mission, Samuel felt strongly that his parents needed him. He returned to Manchester, traveling 21 miles after sunset. Samuel’s father had been imprisoned for a small debt, a common practice at the time. Samuel brought food to his father and comforted him. When Samuel returned home, he moved the

family to Waterloo, New York, near Fayette, where Joseph Sr. joined them after his 30-day confinement.

Once settled, the Smiths continued their tradition of evening devotionals, which soon included nearly 20 people. One evening two young boys came in and quietly asked Samuel if he could pray soon because they had to be home by eight. Samuel kindly suggested to the group that he pray immediately, which he did. The boys came every evening thereafter.¹⁵

By the summer of 1833, the Saints had gathered in Kirtland, Ohio (see D&C 37). Samuel had served four missions (see page 48). That summer Mary Bailey and her friend Agnes Coolbrith arrived in Kirtland. They were among those

EIGHT WITNESSES VIEW THE BOOK OF MORMON PLATES BY DALE KILBOURN



Samuel and Orson Hyde had baptized in Boston. The young ladies boarded with the Smiths, as others had. Samuel and the refined and educated Mary began courting and married on August 12, 1834. During this time, Samuel “cultivate[d] the soil he loved,”¹⁶ labored on the temple, and served as an active member of the high council, where he was known “for the mingled qualities of justice and mercy.”¹⁷

Daughters Susannah and Mary were born in October 1835 and in March 1837, respectively. Between the births of Samuel’s daughters, the Kirtland Temple was dedicated on March 27, 1836. Samuel, as head of the high council, stood among those in the tiered pulpits reserved for the Prophet and Melchizedek Priesthood officers.

Yet during this time of spiritual outpouring, crisis came as many banks throughout the country collapsed in 1837. The Church-owned Kirtland Safety Society was among them. Nearly all the Saints lost money, including Samuel. Some of the most prominent members apostatized. Samuel, however, remained faithful.

Suffering in Missouri

In March 1838, as the Saints were continuing to gather to Missouri, Samuel and Mary settled on a 160-acre tract

in Marrowbone, Daviess County. Samuel began again to clear the land. Here Mary gave birth in August 1838 to a son, named Samuel Harrison Bailey Smith. When violence against the Saints escalated, Samuel went to Far West to get a wagon to move his family. While he was gone, a mob carried Mary and her newborn son on a featherbed out into the rain. They put toddlers Susannah and Mary on the bed with them and then burned the house to the ground. Soon after, a neighbor furnished a wagon, horses, and a boy to take them to Far West to find Samuel. After a day and a half in the pouring rain, they met up with Samuel, who was returning home. They went on to Far West, where Samuel’s mother cared for them. Samuel’s gentle wife, Mary, however, never fully recovered.¹⁸

In late October 1838, Samuel, as part of the local Latter-day Saint militia, fought in the battle of Crooked River. Afterward, the Missourians pursued the militia. Brigham Young counseled them to flee to Quincy, Illinois, which they did.¹⁹ They arrived in early 1839. They were among the first of the Saints to live in Quincy, about 50 miles south of Nauvoo. Mary and the children met up with Samuel here. When his parents arrived at the Mississippi River after an exhausting journey through Missouri,

THE MISSIONS OF SAMUEL H. SMITH

Samuel Smith’s missionary efforts were extraordinary, making him “one of the foremost builders in the early years of the Church.”¹

Though Samuel was not always as eloquent as his brothers or his companions,² his testimony was strong. He said, “How could I doubt anything that I knew to be true?”³ In a blessing given by his father, Samuel was promised that his testimony would be received by thousands.⁴ This blessing was fulfilled through Samuel’s six missions.⁵

1. Spring and summer 1830: Samuel served alone in the neighboring communities around Palmyra, New York.⁶
2. January 31, 1831, to April 1831: Samuel Smith and Orson Pratt preached the gospel in the vicinity of Kirtland, Ohio. In April they baptized about 50 people, many previously of the Campbellite faith.⁷
3. June 4, 1831, to mid-November 1831: Samuel, who had recently been ordained a high priest, was one of many elders called to Independence, Missouri (see D&C 52:1–2, 30; 57:1–3). He and his missionary companion, Reynolds Cahoon, had powerful missionary experiences. They returned to Kirtland on September 28 but were immediately asked to serve briefly in southern Ohio.
4. November 16, 1831, to late December 1831: Samuel Smith and

William McLellin served in eastern Ohio (see D&C 66:7–8). William recorded that Samuel laid his hands upon a badly scalded child and the burn was healed “in so much that it did not even so much as blister.”⁸ This mission ended abruptly after 40 days because William had murmured in his heart (see D&C 75:6–8).

5. February 1, 1832, to December 22, 1832: Samuel Smith and Orson Hyde were called to serve in New England (see D&C 75:13). Their efforts resulted in about 60 baptisms and the establishment of four branches.
6. April 1841 to November 1841: Scott County, Illinois (see page 49).

NOTES

1. John A. Widtsoe, *Joseph Smith: Seeker after Truth, Prophet of God* (1951), 166.
2. See *Millennial Star*, Nov. 26, 1864, 774.
3. Quoted in Richard Lloyd Anderson, “Joseph Smith’s Brothers: Nauvoo and After,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1979, 31.
4. Quoted in Ruby K. Smith, *Mary Bailey* (1954), 42.
5. A letter dated June 25, 1836, from Don Carlos Smith to his wife, Agnes, suggests the possibility of an additional mission. Samuel and Don Carlos (and perhaps another named Wilber) may have been called to serve a mission together in Boston. See Ruby Smith, *Mary Bailey*, 56.
6. See *History of the Church*, 7:218.
7. See Kyle R. Walker, *United by Faith: The Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith Family* (2005), 213–14.
8. See *The Journals of William E. McLellin: 1831–1836*, ed. Jan Shipps and John W. Welch (1994), 66. Spelling and punctuation modernized.



Samuel crossed the river, arranged for them to ride a ferry to Quincy, and then gave them his rented house.

In the spring, Samuel and Don Carlos accepted an offer from a local resident to farm land near Macomb, about 60 miles from Quincy. Both families lived on the farm.²⁰ This would have been a blessing to Mary. Agnes, Mary's friend from Boston and wife of Don Carlos, had also suffered a mob attack in Missouri. Agnes likely provided comfort to Mary, who had not spoken above a whisper since her attack in Missouri."²¹

Life in Nauvoo and Plymouth

At some point, Samuel and his family moved to Nauvoo. Samuel's daughter Mary remembered happy times. "Father would seat himself in the middle of the room. . . . The first on his lap got a kiss; so we would continue until we had all obtained the coveted kiss. . . . When we were all well tired out and quite sleepy . . . Father would take my brother [Samuel]—who was the youngest—in his lap, and sing him to sleep."²²

Sadly, Samuel's beloved wife, Mary, died in January 1841 at age 32 after giving birth to Lucy Bailey Smith. Infant Lucy died a few weeks later. Samuel was left without his wife, and the three children, all under age six, were left without a mother.

For a while, Samuel continued his church and civic activities in Nauvoo, where he served in a bishopric, in the city government, and as a captain in the Nauvoo Legion.

In 1841 he was called to serve a mission to Scott County, Illinois. There, on April 29, he married Levira Clark, a Latter-day Saint from Livonia, New York, whom he likely knew from his earlier missions. The children came to live with Levira, who remained at her parents' home in Scott County until Samuel finished his mission in the fall.²³ It seems likely he visited his family often during his mission, since he served in the area.

Samuel and his family returned to Nauvoo, where he resumed some of his former church and civic activities. In the fall of 1842, when his brother William needed help, Samuel moved his family, which now included a



Copies of the Book of Mormon left by Samuel (top) in New York led to the baptism of future Church leaders Brigham Young (middle) and Heber C. Kimball (bottom).



Above: Samuel rode to Carthage at great speed. The mob shot at him, a bullet passing through the top of his hat. Samuel, however, was an excellent horseman and outran them.

Right: Samuel helped load the bodies of his brothers Joseph and Hyrum into two wagons, and then he drove the wagon carrying Joseph to Nauvoo.

baby named Levira Annette, to Plymouth, about 40 miles from Nauvoo. Here Samuel and Levira helped maintain William's inn while William represented Hancock County in the Illinois Legislature until 1843.

When William returned, Samuel acquired a farm north of Plymouth. Again he cleared timber, built fences, and farmed, preaching the gospel when he had the opportunity.²⁴ Another child, Louisa, was born in August and, sadly, died as an infant.

During this time Samuel made several trips to Nauvoo. On December 17, 1843, about seven months before he died, he attended a prayer meeting in the upper room of the Prophet's red brick store. At this time, Samuel and others made eternal covenants as they received their temple ordinances. Certainly this was a blessing in his life since he would not live to see the temple finished in Nauvoo.²⁵

Samuel Rides to Carthage

On June 27, 1844, while still living in Plymouth, Samuel learned that his brothers

Joseph and Hyrum, who were in Carthage Jail with John Taylor and Willard Richards, were in danger. Samuel headed toward Carthage with a 14-year-old boy driving a wagon. On the way they met a mob, which attacked when they learned Samuel was Joseph Smith's brother. The boy headed to Carthage with the wagon, and Samuel escaped into the woods "after severe fatigue, and much danger."²⁶

He made his way home and "acquired a horse noted for its speed."²⁷ His six-year-old daughter, Mary, remembers this moment: "My father came into the house in much excitement, and said . . . 'I think I can break through the mob and get to Carthage' and immediately he mounted the horse and was gone."²⁸

As he neared the town, a man and woman escaping in a buggy told him his brothers had been killed. Samuel rode on at great speed. Some of the mob, expecting his return, had hidden in a thicket. They chased Samuel, shooting at him. A bullet passed through the top of his hat, but Samuel, an excellent horseman, outran them.

Samuel was the first Latter-day Saint to arrive at the jail,²⁹ but by then Joseph and Hyrum were already dead. The violence was over, the mob had retreated, and Samuel had a piercing pain in his side.

Samuel helped Willard Richards take the two bodies and the severely wounded John Taylor to a nearby hotel owned by Artois Hamilton. That night Willard wrote a letter to Emma telling her that Joseph and Hyrum were dead. Samuel's signature appears alongside that of Willard Richards and John Taylor.³⁰

The next day, Samuel, Willard, and Artois took the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum in two wagons to the Mansion House in Nauvoo. Samuel drove the wagon carrying the body of his brother Joseph. A guard of eight men accompanied them.³¹

After Lucy viewed the bodies, Samuel said, "Mother, I have had a dreadful distress in my side ever since I was chased by the mob."³²

Though Samuel was in pain and Levira was only weeks away from delivering a baby, the family moved into a two-story frame house opposite the Mansion House. Samuel's health continued to decline. On July 30, just 34 days after Joseph and Hyrum

died, Samuel died. His young daughter Mary remembered how "silence gave way to sobs"³³ after their father passed away. His cause of death was listed as bilious fever.³⁴

Levira, "a mild, quiet" woman,³⁵ left Susannah, Mary, and Samuel with Hyrum's widow, Mary Fielding Smith, and took her toddler to her parents. Twenty-one days after Samuel died, Lucy J. C. Smith was born and died soon after. Levira was ill and was unable to return to Nauvoo for some time.

"Equal to Thy Brethren"

Samuel's obituary in the *Times and Seasons* said: "If ever there lived a good man upon the earth, Samuel H. Smith was that person. His labors in the church from first to last, . . . [and his] many saintly traits of virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity, shall be given of him hereafter as a man of God."³⁶

Samuel H. Smith willingly gave everything, including his life, to help build the kingdom of God. He did not "exaggerate either his importance or his experiences."³⁷ His life attests to the truth that "by small and simple things are great things brought to pass" (Alma 37:6). With a pure heart, Samuel tended to the needs of his wife, children, parents, and siblings. Because of Samuel, the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum had more freedom to fulfill their missions relative to the Restoration of the gospel. In that, the words of a blessing from Father Smith were fulfilled: "Thou shall hear [the Lord's] voice [saying] Samuel, Samuel. Thou shalt be equal to thy brethren."³⁸ ■

NOTES

1. Quoted in Ruby K. Smith, *Mary Bailey* (1954), 56.
2. See Ruby Smith, *Mary Bailey*, 96.
3. *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor (1996), 331.
4. Quoted in Ruby Smith, *Mary Bailey*, 83.
5. Quoted in Ruby Smith, *Mary Bailey*, 41.
6. The Smiths were also the parents of Alvin, Hyrum, Sophronia, Joseph Jr., William, Katharine, Don Carlos, Lucy, and two infant sons who died at birth. See "The First Family of the Restoration," *Ensign*, Dec. 2005, 7–9.
7. *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 87.
8. *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 87.
9. *Deseret Evening News*, Jan. 20, 1894, 11.
10. *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 112.
11. Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, July 25, 1844, 5.
12. See *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jesse, 3 vols. (1989–94), 1:10.
13. *History of the Church*, 1:44. Some sources list Samuel's baptism as May 15.
14. "The Testimony of Eight Witnesses," Book of Mormon.
15. See *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 246.
16. Ruby Smith, *Mary Bailey*, 83.
17. B. H. Roberts, *New Witness for God*, 3 vols. (1909), 2:294.
18. See Kyle R. Walker, *United by Faith: The Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith Family* (2005), 225.
19. For the story of their escape, see *History of the Church*, 7:219–20.
20. See Walker, *United by Faith*, 227.
21. See Walker, *United by Faith*, 225.
22. Quoted in Ruby Smith, *Mary Bailey*, 87.
23. See Journal History, July 30, 1849.
24. See *History of the Church*, 7:221.
25. See Journal History, Dec. 17, 1843.
26. B. H. Roberts, *The Rise and Fall of Nauvoo* (1965), 450.
27. Walker, *United by Faith*, 230.
28. Quoted in Ruby Smith, *Mary Bailey*, 90.
29. See *History of the Church*, 7:110–11.
30. See *History of the Church*, 6:624–25.
31. See Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (2002), 400–401.
32. Quoted in *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 459.
33. Quoted in Ruby Smith, *Mary Bailey*, 91.
34. See Walker, *United by Faith*, 234–35.
35. See Ruby Smith, *Mary Bailey*, 92.
36. Quoted in *History of the Church*, 7:222.
37. Walker, *United by Faith*, 220.
38. Quoted in Walker, *United by Faith*, 223.



DEATH OF A PROPHET, BY GARY E. SMITH

Grasshoppers, and Other Surprises

BY WANDA I. ALLEN

When our first child was born, I felt confident in my ability to be a good mother. I had studied child development in college, and I was firmly convinced that if I applied scientific principles of child rearing, everything would go smoothly.

As we welcomed four babies into our family during the following six years, I began making discoveries that weren't in the textbooks. There were some things no one had told me—some important things!

My knowledge of child development had prompted me to welcome the assistance of little helping hands when baking cookies, for instance, but it hadn't told me how to keep four pairs of hands and feet out of the batter, give everyone a stirring turn, remember to add all the right ingredients, save enough dough to make the cookies, and keep calm all at the same time. That problem was mine to solve.

When, in a day's time, I was confronted with a crayon-decorated purple bathtub, a pound of margarine smeared on the carpet, a quart bottle full of pears broken on the kitchen floor, and a tearful little boy whose pet grasshopper had escaped, I felt overwhelmed and frustrated.

In the middle of turmoil the answers began to come—not all at once, but little by little, just as the problems had come. When our four-year-old borrowed the wrench and dismantled his tricycle, I was upset and indignant. Questioning him, I received his answer, given in all sincerity: "Well, they shouldn't make tricycles so children can take them apart!" When I could see humor in the situation, the problem shrank before my eyes.

The morning I found a newly opened box of

cereal completely emptied on top of the kitchen counter, I resisted the impulse to scold two-year-old Melody long enough to hear her explanation: "I was just trying to get Heidi some breakfast, and it kept coming out!" A scolding for that episode would have deprived me of seeing a spark of love and kindness being developed in a toddler.

When Curtis broke into his new savings bank, at first I saw only the intent to damage and destroy. After a calm, understanding interview with our son, my husband, Dell, learned that Curtis was simply trying to disprove a statement he had heard—that this bank was one *nobody* could open. Having proved his point, Curtis hasn't disturbed the repaired lock since.

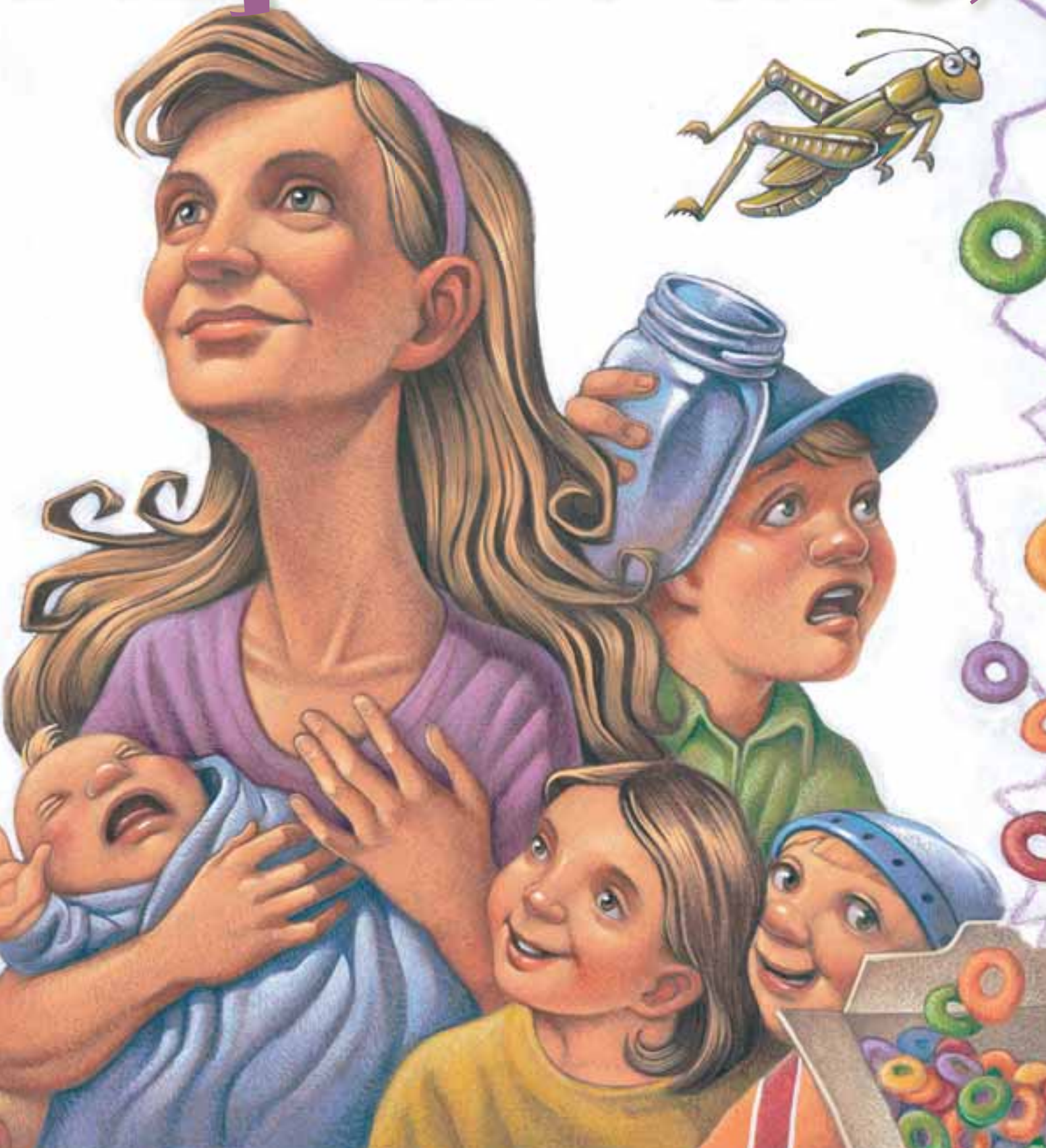
I've learned some of life's most valuable lessons from preschool children: to greet each day with enthusiasm and eagerness; to pursue adventure despite obstacles; to delight in new discoveries; to enjoy spontaneous fun; to regard the eating of toothpaste and the emptying of sand-filled shoes on the carpet as minor problems, not major catastrophes.

I had thought my college classes prepared me to control my environment so things would always go smoothly. But I've learned that when five children are hungry or tired or both, things *don't* go smoothly. When I accept this as an inevitable—even adventurous—part of daily living, I can be more flexible and less demanding.

When I can scoop my mud-covered two-year-old into my arms and deposit her into the bathtub for an unscheduled bath—and remain unruffled—I know I'm making progress. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY GREG NEWBOLD

Purple Bathtubs,



Family Faith

BY KIMBERLY REID

Church Magazines

To this day centuries-old cathedrals are some of the tallest structures in Italy. Ancient ruins boast of past societies while medieval houses lie nestled along winding streets. Building codes prohibit modern high-rises from being constructed, and the rural Tuscan landscape is legally protected against overdevelopment. That's because Italian citizens are committed to preserving their history. If the renowned Renaissance man Michelangelo returned to earth today, Italians hope he would easily recognize his homeland.

Church members throughout Italy are interested in preserving much more than architecture and landscape. They aim to preserve faith across generations. Like

many Church members around the world, Italian Latter-day Saints are pioneers in creating multiple-generation families joined in gospel covenants. These Church members face old traditions and pervasive secularism in the surrounding culture, but they focus on the Savior and try to build faith that will thrive in the hearts of their posterity.

Revering Family

One of the first components in building family faith is the courage to *begin* a family. Marco and Raffaella Ferrini of the Firenze Second Branch, Florence Italy District, dated each other before serving missions. Soon after returning home, they both felt impressed in the temple that they should marry soon. "In Italy it's more common to get married in your 30s," Marco says. Some friends and relatives asked them, "Why are you getting married so young?"





“I knew that if I raised my children in the gospel, they would have answers to their questions.”

—Anna Ferrini

The couple credits the influence of Marco’s parents, Anna and Bruno, for helping them value marriage. When Anna joined the Church in 1968, there were few Church members in Italy. After praying about her decision, she married Bruno, a man who respected her beliefs and allowed her to teach their children the gospel. “I never worried about marrying a Mormon because of the great respect Anna and I had for each other,” Bruno says.

Although Anna felt pained because she couldn’t offer her children all the blessings of an eternal family, she says, “I knew my husband was a good man and eventually everything would fall into place.” In the meantime she taught her sons, Marco and Alessio, to make the Savior the center of their lives and to value the family.

Eventually Bruno joined the Church. Today he is president of the Firenze Second Branch. But during the 29 years that he was not interested in the Church, he and Anna still worked to have a happy marriage. Their loving

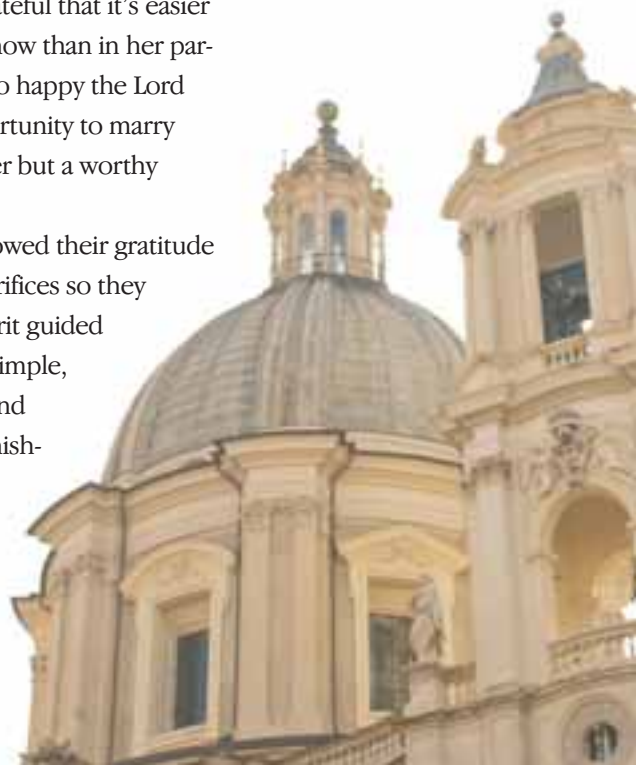
relationship made a positive impact on their children and their daughter-in-law. “When I first set foot in their home, it really hit me that they have a good family life,” Raffaella says. “They don’t yell at each other.

They are calm and nice to each other. I really wanted that.”

Raffaella also wanted a temple marriage. She says, “To marry in the temple is a good goal,” even though it may be harder to achieve in countries with fewer Church members. “Satan tries to convince us to make wrong decisions, but when we have a good goal clearly set in our minds, Heavenly Father will help us overcome everything so we can reach that goal.” She is grateful that it’s easier to meet Latter-day Saints now than in her parents’ generation. She’s also happy the Lord blessed her with the opportunity to marry “not just a Church member but a worthy priesthood holder.”

Raffaella and Marco showed their gratitude to the Lord by making sacrifices so they could marry when the Spirit guided them to. They planned a simple, inexpensive celebration, and Marco decided to delay finishing his university studies. “Everything is so expensive here that it’s hard to do more than one thing

Opposite page: Giulia, Marco, Raffaella, Lorenzo, Alessio, Anna, and Bruno Ferrini stand strong in the faith.





at once—study, work, and have a family,” he says. Financial concerns prompt most Italians to finish school and establish careers before marriage, “but our main desire was to start our family,” Marco says. He realized that only three things were vitally necessary to be able to do so: a job, a place to live, and the faith to move forward. At first “I didn’t get a very good job, but it was enough,” Marco says. “Anytime you have to make a hard decision, you just have to jump in. You go by faith and try your best,” trusting that needed blessings will come. Eventually he was blessed with a better-paying job in the tourist industry, thanks to the foreign languages he learned on his mission. He also has a testimony of paying tithing because his young family has never been in need.

Marco values Church leaders’ counsel to get an education, and he plans to earn his degree when his children are a little older. But for now, “I feel the Spirit telling me that it’s important for me to be with my family. And since my two children, Giulia and Lorenzo, have been born, I haven’t regretted a thing.”

“We don’t have much money,” Raffaella says, “but we are happy.” They are grateful to participate in the plan of happiness and teach its truths to the next generation—the third generation in their family to receive gospel blessings.

United in Purpose

Spiritual unity can be a crucial ingredient in building solid family faith, says Piero Sonaglia of the Rome Italy Stake. “Being united in purpose can be a source of strength for all families,” but it is especially a blessing when that purpose is to “move together toward Jesus Christ.” This is his family’s most important goal.

Piero didn’t always have such priorities. At age 15 he left the Church and didn’t look back until becoming a father and dealing with his own father’s near-fatal heart attack. These incidents sparked memories of gospel teachings he had learned as a child. “I knew very clearly that I had to



repent and put my life in order,” he says. He also knew that “such an important and drastic change” would affect his family. His parents had divorced, partly because of religious differences, and he wanted his own family to be united.

Piero’s wife, Carla, grew up practicing a different religion from his and had attended church each Sunday as a child. “But I would come home feeling more confused,” she says. For her, religion had been a matter of tradition rather than something to shape her life. Carla hungered for something more. She says, “I felt a strong desire to pray to Heavenly Father on my own, using my own words” instead of written prayers. Her heartfelt, prayerful relationship with the Lord prepared her to embrace the restored gospel when Piero returned to activity.

As parents now united in faith, Piero and Carla try to prepare their sons, Ilario and Mattia, against temptation—starting now, while they are young. “We read scriptures every night and have family home evening,” Carla says. “Our sons are happy to participate. We go to church. We pray together. We go to the temple.” Regular temple attendance for Piero and Carla is not a small feat when the nearest temples are in Switzerland and Spain.

“We try to recognize every moment as an opportunity to teach,” Piero adds. “At this stage in their lives, our young sons are especially learning to obey their parents.” Piero hopes this will help them learn to obey Heavenly Father, arming them with the strength and testimony necessary to remain



faithful throughout their teenage years and beyond. He knows—and wants his children to know—that lasting happiness is found only in obedience to God.

Like Piero, Andrea Rondinelli of the Rome Italy Stake found the gospel after a life-changing event, the death of his father. “I realized it could not end like that,” he says. He sensed that there must be life beyond the grave and purpose to life and death. He had encountered the Church 15 years earlier when his sisters were baptized. After his father’s death he sought out the missionaries and was baptized 15 days later.

Soon he received his patriarchal blessing. In it the Lord promised him an eternal companion. “While I was looking for her, I prayed a lot,” he says. He wanted a wife who would share a common spiritual purpose with him, and he ended one engagement when his fiancée didn’t want to be sealed in the temple. “I did everything I could to be ready for

Opposite page: Andrea Rondinelli prayed for an eternal family. His wife, Mariela, and their children, Daniele and Valentina, are answers to his prayers. Above: Piero and Carla Sonaglia teach the gospel to their sons, Ilario and Mattia.



Lorenzo and Ilaria Mariani make sacrifices so they can teach their children, Gioele and Davide, how to keep an eternal perspective.

the moment I would meet my wife,” he says. In answer to one of his prayers, Andrea had an impression that someday he would have a son. This experience helped him be patient until he met Mariela.

Mariela found the gospel in Colombia at age 11. After serving a mission in her native country, she visited Italy. She was surprised—and a little distressed—to feel the Spirit prompting her to stay permanently. “Everything was OK back in Colombia,” she says. “I had a job. I was involved in the Church. I had the opportunity to study. But I felt in my heart that I was here for a purpose, that my role was here.”

Andrea is grateful for that prompting. He and Mariela met two years after his baptism, and today they enjoy the kind of marriage they waited for—sealed in the temple, equally yoked in faith. They continue to build unity by “spending time together, like going on walks,” Mariela says.

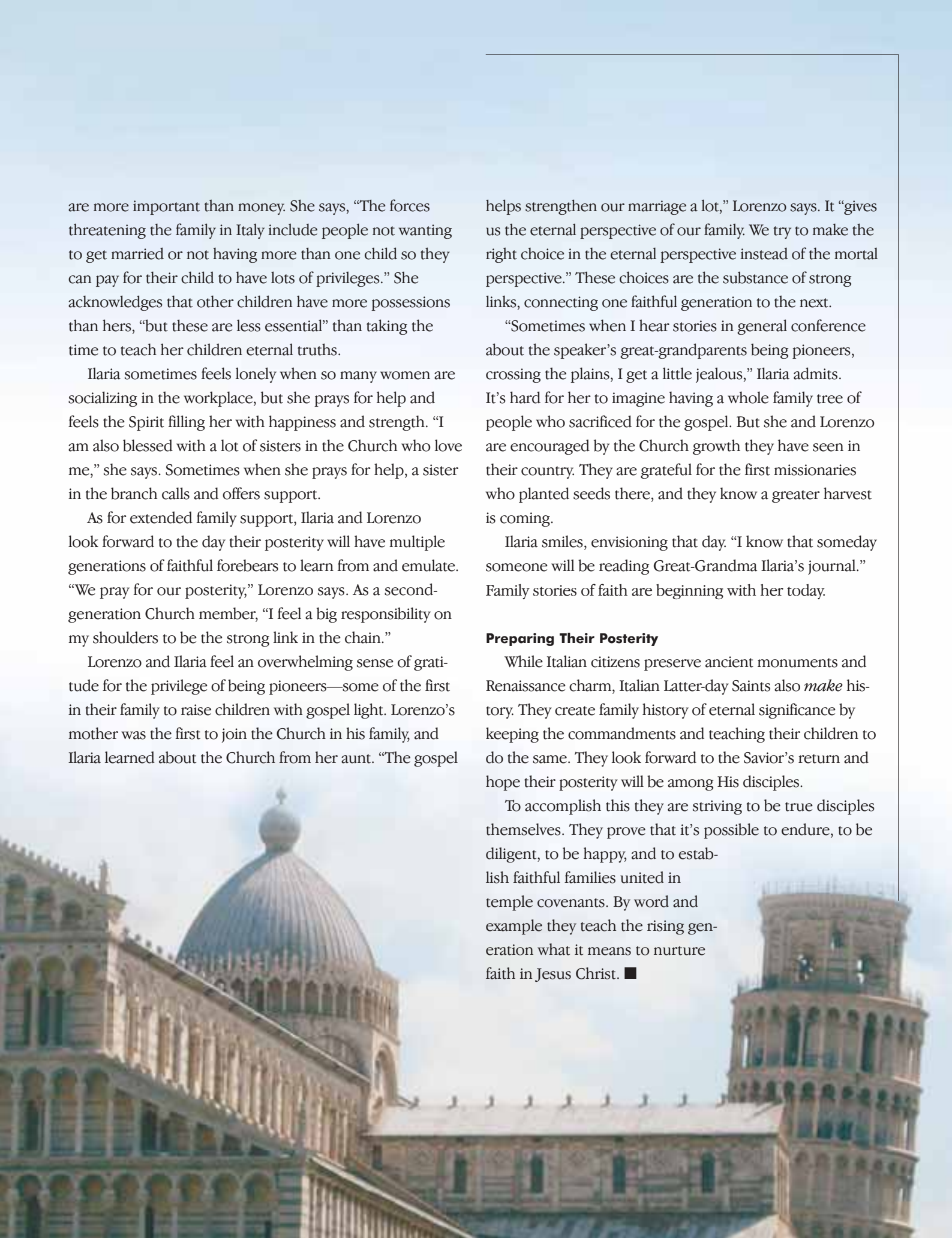
Family home evening is also key. “Our son’s baptism involved the whole family,” Andrea says. For months they spent family home evening learning how to prepare for baptism and confirmation and “studying the principles that Daniele was going to embrace. We were all involved together, and we felt very much prepared for the occasion.” Whenever they hold family home evening, the children are involved. “Our daughter, Valentina, leads the music,” Andrea says. He smiles. “She’s very good.” Daniele chooses the hymns and sometimes helps prepare the lessons. “Every Monday is always a beautiful experience for all

of our family members,” Andrea says. Such experiences strengthen the spiritual foundation upon which their children and grandchildren may build.

Living with Joy

A third component in building family faith is to live with joy, says Lorenzo Mariani of the Pisa Branch, Florence Italy District. Lorenzo is a counselor in the district presidency while his wife, Ilaria, is a stay-at-home mother who serves in Young Women. They have a lot to do, and they try to accomplish it with a smile. They believe their visible happiness can help mold their children’s attitudes toward the gospel. “When we do something for the Church, we show a good example by not appearing stressed and by having a good attitude,” Lorenzo says. “Children can tell if you do something with joy or just because it’s a duty.”

“I think a lot every day about how to instill faith in my children,” Ilaria says. She hopes her constant loving care will show her sons, Gioele and Davide, the joy of families and that relationships



are more important than money. She says, “The forces threatening the family in Italy include people not wanting to get married or not having more than one child so they can pay for their child to have lots of privileges.” She acknowledges that other children have more possessions than hers, “but these are less essential” than taking the time to teach her children eternal truths.

Ilaria sometimes feels lonely when so many women are socializing in the workplace, but she prays for help and feels the Spirit filling her with happiness and strength. “I am also blessed with a lot of sisters in the Church who love me,” she says. Sometimes when she prays for help, a sister in the branch calls and offers support.

As for extended family support, Ilaria and Lorenzo look forward to the day their posterity will have multiple generations of faithful forebears to learn from and emulate. “We pray for our posterity,” Lorenzo says. As a second-generation Church member, “I feel a big responsibility on my shoulders to be the strong link in the chain.”

Lorenzo and Ilaria feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the privilege of being pioneers—some of the first in their family to raise children with gospel light. Lorenzo’s mother was the first to join the Church in his family, and Ilaria learned about the Church from her aunt. “The gospel

helps strengthen our marriage a lot,” Lorenzo says. It “gives us the eternal perspective of our family. We try to make the right choice in the eternal perspective instead of the mortal perspective.” These choices are the substance of strong links, connecting one faithful generation to the next.

“Sometimes when I hear stories in general conference about the speaker’s great-grandparents being pioneers, crossing the plains, I get a little jealous,” Ilaria admits. It’s hard for her to imagine having a whole family tree of people who sacrificed for the gospel. But she and Lorenzo are encouraged by the Church growth they have seen in their country. They are grateful for the first missionaries who planted seeds there, and they know a greater harvest is coming.

Ilaria smiles, envisioning that day. “I know that someday someone will be reading Great-Grandma Ilaria’s journal.” Family stories of faith are beginning with her today.

Preparing Their Posterity

While Italian citizens preserve ancient monuments and Renaissance charm, Italian Latter-day Saints also *make* history. They create family history of eternal significance by keeping the commandments and teaching their children to do the same. They look forward to the Savior’s return and hope their posterity will be among His disciples.

To accomplish this they are striving to be true disciples themselves. They prove that it’s possible to endure, to be diligent, to be happy, and to establish faithful families united in temple covenants. By word and example they teach the rising generation what it means to nurture faith in Jesus Christ. ■

Love, Limits and



BY CRAIG H. HART, LLOYD D. NEWELL, AND JULIE H. HAUPT

Despite the many joys of childrearing, fathers and mothers often find their skills as parents tested. A three-year-old defiantly says no to all food placed before him at dinner. Siblings tussle over a coveted toy as the all too familiar squealing and crying reverberate through the house. A 10-year-old refuses to go to bed at a reasonable hour, insisting he should be able to stay up as late as his teenage sister. And a 16-year-old tearfully argues with her parents, saying, “Why can’t you trust me?” after failing to get permission to go on an unsupervised overnight excursion with friends.

The way parents handle such situations affects their relationship with each child as well as the spiritual climate in the home. Because no two children are alike or respond exactly the same way, President Brigham Young (1801–77) wisely counseled parents to “study [children’s] dispositions and their temperaments, and deal with them accordingly.”¹ President James E. Faust (1920–2007) reminded us that “child rearing is so individualistic. . . . What works with one [child] may not work with another.”² In seeking for solutions to challenges, parents will achieve better results as they approach each child’s needs with a carefully

Latitude

With the assistance of the Lord, parents can employ a tailored approach to help children reach their full potential.

love

tailored combination of three parenting principles—*love*, *limits*, and *latitude*.

LOVE

Love fosters relationships and security. Brigham Young taught that “kind looks, kind actions, kind words, and a lovely, holy deportment towards them will bind our children to us with bands that cannot be easily broken; while abuse and unkindness will drive them from us.”³ One mother learned the power of leading with love after she realized that her escalating temper was not helping

her 10-year-old son make it to bed any earlier at night. Prompted by reading the counsel of President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) that “you can only correct your children . . . in kindness, by love unfeigned, by persuasion, and reason,”⁴ she tried a gentler approach. As they talked through the problem, she gained new insight into his needs and concerns. Together they agreed on bedtime guidelines, and their relationship improved.

Kind words and gentleness during times of disagreement show respect for the relationship—as does controlling one’s emotions. Of course, developing parental self-control is easier said than done. As Brigham Young noted, “I have seen more parents who were unable to control themselves than I ever saw who were unable to control their children.”⁵ With heavenly help, we can learn to respond to frustrations with patience.

Be Companionable

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) encouraged parents to be “companionable” with their children.⁶ Arriving home each evening after a long day at work, a father found himself frustrated with his young children who were eager for his attention and quick to contend if he was preoccupied. Before entering the house each evening, he decided to offer a prayer that he could meet his children’s needs better. He set aside the evening paper, spent his first 10 minutes greeting and playing with the children, and periodically took the children one-on-one on a walk or outing. His frustrations disappeared, his children seemed more satisfied, and many rewarding experiences followed.

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said, “Take time to be a real friend to your children.”⁷ This includes spending time with them, showing affection, praising what they do well, teaching new skills, reading to them, conversing often, and assuring children they are loved during moments of correction. A loving, patient response to a son

Loving our children involves spending time with them, showing affection, praising what they do well, teaching new skills, reading to them, conversing often, and assuring them they are loved during moments of correction.

or daughter whose behavior is immature, inconvenient, or annoying assures the child of the constancy of parental love while teaching a better way (see 1 Corinthians 12:31).

Reward the Good

Seeking and rewarding the good in children are remarkably effective ways to show parental love. Try to offer at least five positive comments for each correcting one. For example, give compliments (“The flowers look great—thanks for pulling those weeds”), provide earned rewards (“If you finish your homework early, you can go to the movie with your friends”), and share the satisfaction that comes from service (“It was sure great seeing the smile on Sister Walker’s face when we delivered the dinner we prepared”).

Avoid Coercion

A natural response to misbehavior can be to simply demand, rather than invite, obedience. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles related the story of a man who was determined to train a colt by simply pulling on the lead rope. Each time he yanked, the colt fell down. After a few minutes, the man had successfully taught the colt to fall down. Then the man’s wife made an excellent suggestion: Walk beside the colt. “To my friend’s chagrin,” said Elder Ballard, “it worked.”⁸ Parents will have more success if they lead by example. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, suggested that parents may need to give up parental behavior that produced bad results in the past and try a better way.⁹

Inappropriate attempts to force obedience, like “yanking the rope,” create difficulty in fostering companionable relationships with young children and teens. Coercion—physical or psychological—is not appropriate. Coercive behavior includes physical and verbal abuse, threats, shouting, manipulating, withdrawing love, and shaming. While coercion may lead to momentary obedience or compliance, it rarely results in a long-term solution. President Gordon B. Hinckley reiterated that “discipline

with severity, discipline with cruelty inevitably leads not to correction but to resentment and bitterness”¹⁰ (see also D&C 121:41–44). “Children don’t need beating,” he emphasized. “They need love and encouragement.”¹¹

One young father became frustrated when “time out” seemed to fail as a discipline strategy for his very energetic young son. Shouting and spanking seemed only to feed the misbehavior. Afraid he might lose control and harm his child, the father took his own “time out.” He left the room and silently prayed for help. When he returned, he invited the

son to build a train with blocks and then to play catch—two favorite activities. He tried to focus on the son’s increasing skills, and he offered ample praise. To the father’s surprise, the son behaved well for the rest of the evening, with only a few gentle reminders. Leading with love worked better than leading by force.

A natural but ineffective response to misbehavior can be to simply demand obedience. One father found that spending positive time with his son encouraged positive behavior much more than shouting or spanking did.

LIMITS

Leading with love requires that parents set clear limits for children’s behavior. Limits protect children and help them develop self-discipline. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) noted, “Setting limits to what a child can do means to that child that you love and respect him.”¹² The Lord has entrusted us as parents with the responsibility to teach

our children (see D&C 68:25). Correcting misbehavior can be one of the most challenging parts of this responsibility. At times, children may chafe, complain, or resist the limits placed upon them. Parents can hold firm with the understanding that teaching values is a lengthy process and that reasonable standards and expectations ultimately help children and teens feel secure and become more successful.

Set Appropriate Rules

Limits should match children’s maturity level. Elder M. Russell Ballard encouraged parents to “set limits in accordance with the importance of the matter involved and the child’s disposition and maturity.”¹³ Thus, a family may have some expectations or rules, perhaps about chores or



L leading with love requires that parents set clear limits on behavior that match the maturity level of each child. When we enforce rules, the method of correction must treat the child with consideration and dignity.

Limits

telephone use, that differ from child to child. When establishing family rules, it is important to distinguish between mountains and molehills. For example, it is important for parents to set limits that help guard their children from potentially harmful influences. Standards associated with media, dress, dating, and other guidelines found in *For the Strength of Youth* can serve as a helpful limit-setting guide.

With their children approaching teen years, one family decided to discuss *For the Strength of Youth* during family home evening. They talked about reasons for adhering to prophetic counsel and the blessings that would result. Later, as the teens came home with questions about things they had seen at school and in the media, these previous conversations about standards helped them feel more comfortable discussing their questions and concerns with their parents.

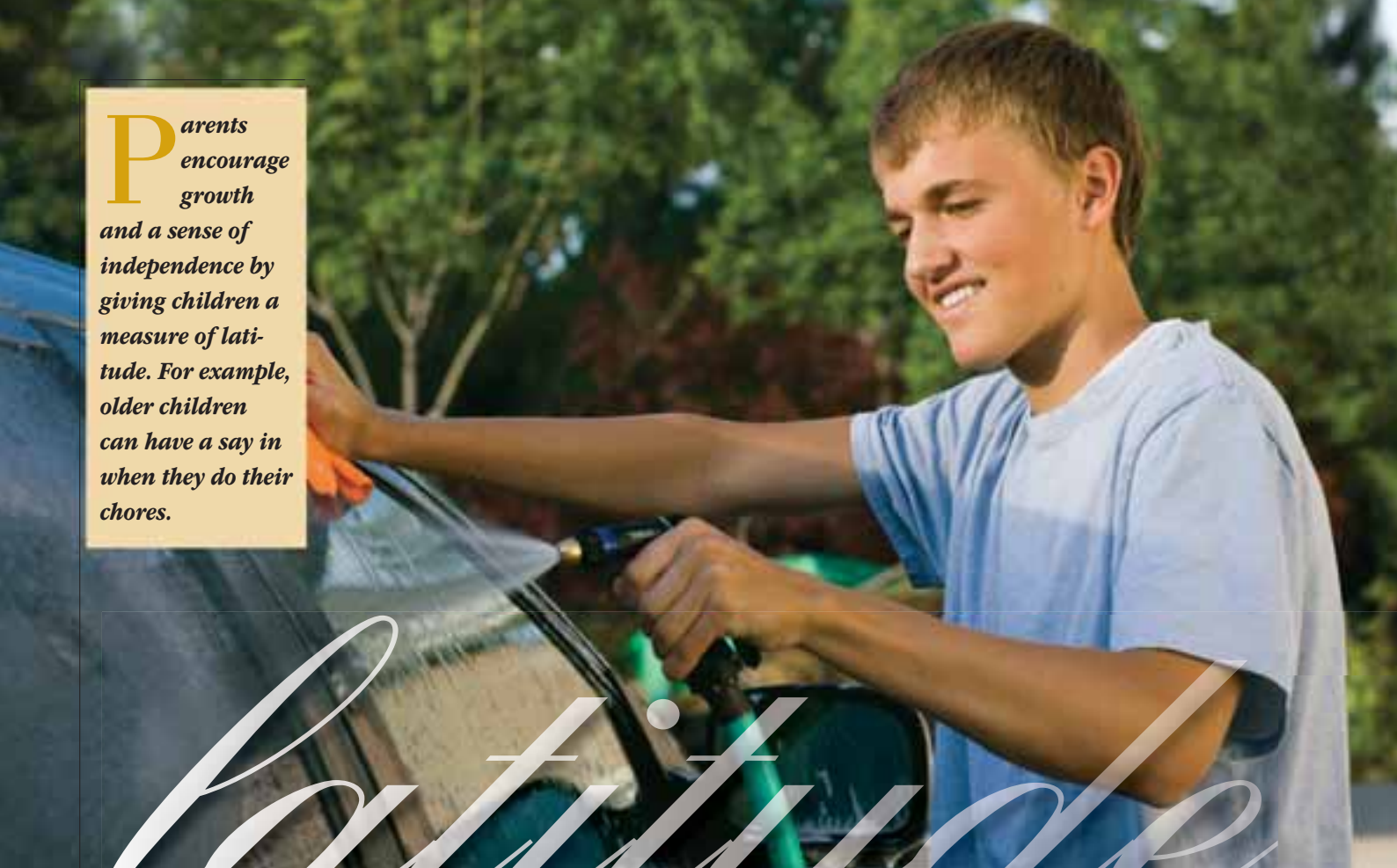
Enforce the Rules

When children do not meet family expectations, parents must decide whether to make an issue of the misbehavior. Milk will spill; children will sometimes be less than careful on the playground; teens may let their social life sabotage

their grades. These experiences can teach them that certain actions are not productive. Helping to clean up the milk, bandaging the wound, or talking through an improved study schedule would be more effective than scolding a child in an attempt to teach a lesson that is already obvious.

Sometimes parents must address more serious indiscretions with appropriate consequences. President Faust encouraged parents to use “prayerful discernment”¹⁴ as they select consequences for misbehavior. No matter the seriousness of the offense, the method of correction must treat the child with consideration and dignity. For example, private reproof is generally better than public reproof. Address the specific infraction without dragging previous misdeeds into the conversation. Stay composed. Discuss the behavior rather than label or demean the child. Short explanations of parental expectations generally work better than extensive lecturing.

When parents remain calm, reasonable consequences are more likely to emerge. President Hinckley said, “I have never accepted the principle of ‘spare the rod and spoil the child.’”¹⁵ He also recalled that “his father never laid a hand on him except to bless him, and he intended to follow suit.”¹⁶



Parents encourage growth and a sense of independence by giving children a measure of latitude. For example, older children can have a say in when they do their chores.

Latitude

The best consequences are generally related to the breach of rules and are designed to help the child achieve the hoped-for outcome. Examples of enforcing limits could include reducing a teen's weeknight activities with friends until grades improve, helping a young child with simple chores before friends come to play, or separating a child from her siblings after an emotional outburst until she is ready to rejoin the family board game.

Avoid Permissive Parenting

Although it is important to remain flexible with discipline, parents who turn a blind eye to serious misconduct or do not calmly and consistently enforce boundaries with reasonable consequences provide insufficient direction and guidance. Elder Ballard explained that it can be "destructive when parents are too permissive and overindulge their children, allowing them to do as they please."¹⁷ Some children and teens will make poor decisions despite the most conscientious parenting. But they are more likely to stray when there is little supervision and they are not held accountable for their whereabouts and activities.

Establishing a routine for discussing plans and checking in is helpful. Some families have found that a family council on Sunday is a good time to coordinate schedules and establish expectations. For example, when 16-year-old Jan forgot to let her parents know that she had gone to a friend's house after soccer practice was cancelled, they discussed why this was a problem. She was reminded to let them know in the future when there were changes to a planned activity. Loving, firm boundaries give children the best chance to succeed.

LATITUDE

As parents lead with love and enforce limits, they can encourage children's sense of independence. Granting autonomy, or latitude, allows children to express their individuality and helps them learn to make good choices. Speaking of the Saints, Joseph Smith said, "I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves."¹⁸ In a similar way, parents need to prepare their children in small steps to govern themselves so that they will be prepared for the day when they eventually leave home.

Parents facilitate this process by giving children a



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

Parents should read and study this article together in advance.

1. Read the section “Avoid Permissive Parenting.” Discuss what a family council is and how it might benefit your family. List items that could be discussed in family council meetings.

2. Demonstrate the need for limits by slowly pouring water into a glass and seeing how full you can fill it without the water spilling over. Talk about reasons for limiting the amount of water in the glass. Compare this to the boundaries set by family rules. Read the first paragraph under the section “Limits.” Discuss or establish appropriate family rules.

and acceptance is better than Satan’s way of force and coercion, especially in rearing teenagers.”²⁰ Appropriate latitude sends a message of trust and respect.

Seeking the Lord’s Assistance

The Savior cherished His relationships and interactions with children. As we seek to view our children as He does, we can be filled with charity toward them. The insights we receive through prayer will help us respond appropriately to their needs and challenges. It helps to remember that

measure of latitude appropriate to their maturity. From the time children are toddlers, parents can let them make reasonable decisions within established boundaries. For example, young children can help choose what to wear on a play day. Older children can have a say in when they do their chores, as long as the chores are completed by a specified time. Teens can be allowed to make media choices so long as they fall within family expectations. Giving children some say in decision making prepares them to make more important decisions later.

Giving children latitude also means negotiating and compromising on rules when appropriate. Elder Ballard emphasized the need for parents to “be prepared to appropriately adjust some rules, thus preparing children for real-world situations.”¹⁹ For example, suppose that you have established the rule that children can play only after chores are done. What happens if cousins stop in unexpectedly for a short visit? In this case, parents and children might decide to be flexible and finish their chores another time. Being willing to negotiate and compromise provides reasonable expectations, gives children more control over their lives, and prepares them for real-world problem-solving situations.

Providing latitude also gives children space to develop their own feelings about the gospel. Teens who have learned to recognize the Spirit and to make choices based on their understanding of right and wrong—rather than simply on parents’ demand for obedience—will be better equipped to make wise decisions in the face of stress or peer pressure. Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that teenagers’ “willingness to choose the Lord’s way and family values is greater when the choice comes from within than when we attempt to force those values upon them. The Lord’s way of love

parenting is a fluid, dynamic process. It can take time to see the results of our efforts. What works today may not work next year or even tomorrow. And no parent handles every situation perfectly. When we fall short, it is important to apologize and try to do better. After all, parents are growing and learning too. With the Lord’s help, parents can provide appropriate love, limits, and latitude that will enable their children to reach their full potential as sons and daughters of God. ■

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3. Brigham Young, *Deseret News Weekly*, Dec. 7, 1864, 2.
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ABOUT THEIR FATHER'S BUSINESS



“They were all young men, and they were exceedingly valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity; but behold, this was not all—they were men who



BY DEAN R. BURGESS
First Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency

Jesus was 12 years old when he traveled with his parents to Jerusalem. On the way back to Nazareth, Joseph and Mary noticed that Jesus was not “among his kindred and acquaintance.” They returned to Jerusalem, and “after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, and they were hearing him, and asking him questions” (Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 2:44–46).

Asked about His absence, Jesus answered, “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” He truly had been about the work of His Father. Upon His return to Nazareth, we learn that He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:49, 52).

Many of our Aaronic Priesthood young men today are also committed to their “Father’s business.” They are becoming favored of the Lord through studying the scriptures, living the commandments, and preparing themselves to be worthy of the temple and of missions.

The Book of Mormon teaches us of other young men who were favored of the Lord because of their faith and obedience (see Alma 56:19). These were Helaman’s 2,000 stripling warriors.

were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted.

“Yea, they were men of truth and soberness, for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God and to walk uprightly before him” (Alma 53:20–21).

The parents of these young men, known as Anti-Nephi-Lehies or the people of Ammon (see Alma 23:16–17; 27:26), had covenanted with God to lay down their weapons of war. But their sons felt an urgency and responsibility to defend their families and freedom (see Alma 53:16–18). Like Jesus, they increased in favor with the Lord because of their faith and obedience.

They “were firm and undaunted. Yea, and they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness; yea, and even according to their faith it was done unto them” (Alma 57:20–21).

Reflecting on the protection they received in battle, Helaman declared, “We do justly ascribe it to the miraculous power of God, because of their exceeding faith in that which they had been taught to believe” (Alma 57:26).

As mothers and fathers in Zion, we also have a responsibility to teach our children to believe,

Our children will increase “in favour with God and man” if we teach them to be obedient and “to walk uprightly” before the Lord.



They “were firm and undaunted. Yea, and they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness; yea, and even according to their faith it was done unto them.”



Many of our Aaronic Priesthood young men today are becoming favored of the Lord through studying the scriptures, living the commandments, and preparing themselves to be worthy of the temple and of missions.

obey, and prepare to make and keep sacred covenants (see D&C 68:25). We would do well to remember Lehi's counsel to his children: "I know that if ye are brought up in the way ye should go ye will not depart from it" (2 Nephi 4:5).

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught: "Teaching is done by precept and example, and by word and deed. A good model is the best teacher. Therefore, a father's [and mother's] first responsibility is to set the proper example."¹ In a worldwide leadership training meeting, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, quoting President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961), said, "Never let your faith be difficult to detect."² As parents and grandparents, we need to strive to make our faith and testimony easy for our children to detect! Elder Holland added, "Parents have to seize the teaching moment because it may not come again."³

My father taught and lived the principles of the gospel. I have been blessed throughout my life by his faith and example. He taught me eternal principles along with the importance of work and responsibility as I grew up working in our small family business and on our farm.

After high school I was preparing to leave home to attend college. I was eager to find employment so I could finance

my college expenses, but I became anxious when the weeks of summer began to pass and I still had no job. My father also became concerned. One day I asked him what he thought I should do to solve my problem. He suggested that we pray, fast, and make sure all of our tithes and offerings were current with the Lord.

"Let's do our part and then turn it over to the Lord," he said.

Immediately the business and farm accounts were balanced and tithing was paid. I learned a great lesson that day from my father to always "seek . . . first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). My father and I were united in purpose as we offered tithes and fervent prayers together. I have never forgotten my father's wise counsel and testimony: "Just pay your tithing, and everything will work out" (see Malachi 3:7–12).

A few days later as my father was working in the family store, a man approached him and asked, "Do you know of a boy who needs a summer job? I own a construction company, and I'm looking for a good laborer." Our

prayers had been answered, and I had been taught a valuable lesson: "Just pay your tithing." Throughout my life, paying tithing has been a blessing for me and my family.

We have been richly blessed as we have continued to teach from this experience. This blessing of an answered prayer, like the blessing bestowed upon the stripling warriors, "we do justly ascribe . . . to the miraculous power of God" (Alma 57:26).

I am grateful for a father who recognized the opportunity to teach a son to act on an eternal principle. I know today, as I learned then, that our children will increase "in favour with God and man" if we teach them to be obedient and "to walk uprightly" before the Lord. ■

NOTES

1. Ezra Taft Benson, "Worthy Fathers, Worthy Sons," *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 35.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Teaching and Learning in the Church," *Ensign*, June 2007, 104.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Teaching and Learning in the Church," 98.

EACH SISTER IS A BELOVED DAUGHTER OF HEAVENLY PARENTS AND HAS A DIVINE DESTINY



Teach the scriptures and statements that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Bear testimony of the doctrine. Invite those you teach to share what they have felt and learned.



What Does It Mean to Be a Beloved Daughter of Heavenly Parents?

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president: “You are literally spirit daughters of Deity, ‘offspring of exalted parents’ with a divine nature and an eternal destiny. You received your first lessons in the world of spirits from your heavenly parents. You have been sent to earth to ‘prove’ yourselves. . . .

“You are treasured children of the

promise. If you will keep the Lord’s statutes and commandments and hearken to His voice, He has promised that He will make you high above the nations in name and honor and praise” (“You Have a Noble Birthright,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2006, 106, 108).

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency: “A conviction that you are a daughter of God gives you a feeling of comfort in your self-worth. It means that you can find strength in the balm of Christ. It will help you meet the heartaches and challenges with faith and serenity” (“What It Means to Be a Daughter of God,” *Liabona*, Jan. 2000, 123; *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 102).

President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901): “We believe that we are the offspring of our Father in heaven, and that we possess in our spiritual organizations the same capabilities, powers and faculties that our Father possesses, although in an infantile state, requiring to pass through a certain course or ordeal by which they will be developed and improved according to the heed we give to the principles we have received” (“Discourse,” *Deseret News*, Jan. 24, 1872, 597).

How Can I Understand and Attain My Divine Destiny?

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985): “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” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 222).

Romans 8:16–17: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “We are to be creators in our own right—builders of an individual faith in God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and faith in His Church. We are to build families and be sealed in holy temples. We are to build the Church and kingdom of God upon the earth. We are to prepare for our own divine destiny—glory, immortality, and eternal lives. These supernal blessings can all be ours, through our faithfulness” (“The Creation,” *Liabona*, July 2000, 104–5; *Ensign*, May 2000, 86). ■



As her voice
echoed from the
church's high
ceilings, tears began to
flow as parishioners
comprehended the hymn's
comforting message.

HYMN IN A CATHEDRAL

By Collin Allan

In September 2004 I traveled to the Netherlands with two of my grandchildren, Jim and Arianne, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Dutch liberation during World War II. We had been invited by the Dutch Historical Group to participate in the commemoration because my brother Evan, a co-pilot of a B-24

bomber, had died while helping with the liberation in 1944.

While there we traveled to Hommersum, just over the border into Germany, to attend a ceremony dedicating a plaque where my brother's plane had crashed. Father Gerard Thuring, one of the event organizers, and I spoke during the

ceremony, after which 17-year-old Arianne sang the U.S. national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," and Jim, 15, helped raise the U.S. flag.

Afterward I told Father Thuring that we would like to attend the special liberation Mass the following day at his church in Oosterhaus. He welcomed our interest and invited us to attend. I then summoned the courage to suggest that Arianne, with whom I had consulted earlier, would be willing to sing at the meeting.

Surprised, he asked, "What will she sing?"

"I Am a Child of God,"¹ I told him.

This good and kind man thought for a moment and then said, "We are all children of God. Let's do it."

When we arrived for the liberation Mass early the next morning, the church was full. Partway through the program, Father Thuring invited Arianne to come up and sing. After escorting her to the front, he said,

“We will now hear a song from a Mormon girl from Utah.”

Without the benefit of music or accompaniment, Arianne began. As her voice echoed from the church’s high ceilings, tears began to flow as parishioners comprehended the hymn’s comforting message.

At the close of the meeting, many in the congregation expressed appreciation and love to Arianne for singing the hymn. The experience was a powerful reminder that all of us—regardless of race, religion, or language—are children of God. ■

NOTE

1. *Hymns*, no. 301.

THE GOLDEN CONTACT I COULDN'T REMEMBER

By Perry W. Carter

While going through my e-mails one morning, I noticed a name I could not place: Enrique Jorge Dias. The subject line read, “*Saludos* [greetings] from a golden contact.”

I had no idea what the message might be about, and I considered hitting the delete key. Curiosity got the best of me, however, and I opened it. It was written in Spanish.

As I read, I learned that when Enrique Dias was 18, he was living

in Adrogué, Argentina, where I served as a full-time missionary more than 30 years earlier. One morning as he was walking through the center of town, I stopped him and handed him a pamphlet about the First Vision. My companion and I, in accordance with instructions from our mission president, often spent mornings handing out pamphlets on the sidewalks of Adrogué. We probably spoke with hundreds of people, though we seldom got their names. Most of our conversations lasted no more than 30 seconds.

More than three decades later, there was no way I could remember speaking to a young man, but he remembered me. A few weeks before I received his

More than three decades later, there was no way I could remember handing a pamphlet to a young man on a sidewalk in Argentina.

e-mail, I had posted my name on the Argentine Mission Web page, where Brother Dias had found it.

In his e-mail he explained that he took the pamphlet home and showed it to his mother, who encouraged him to learn more about Joseph Smith. By the time he tried to find the missionaries a few months later, I had been transferred to a new area.

Enrique received the discussions and was baptized and confirmed. I labored in Argentina for another 20 months but never heard anything about his baptism.

The brief conversation we had shared in the street that morning long ago had transformed his life and the lives of many others. Two years after his baptism he was called on a mission to northern Argentina. Afterward he married and



continued faithful in the Church, serving in a variety of callings, including bishop, counselor to two stake presidents, and high councilor. He added that his oldest son had served a mission in La Paz, Bolivia.

Words cannot express the joy that came to my heart from reading that e-mail message. My mission was filled with many gratifying moments, but this long-delayed news from Enrique Jorge Dias made all of my memories of serving as a missionary even sweeter. ■

LOAVES AND TESTIMONIES

By Vida H. Liddell

One fast Sunday during Relief Society, a sister in our ward stood to bear her testimony. After stating that she had learned how much the Lord loves and cares about her, she shared the following experience.

She had been ill with pneumonia, and one morning she was having a particularly difficult time. Her appetite had diminished considerably, and the only thing she thought she could eat was some homemade bread. She was getting discouraged and had been praying for help to endure her trials.

That very morning her visiting teacher came to the door with a loaf

of homemade bread. The sister bore testimony of the love she had felt from Heavenly Father. He had heard her prayers and provided her with exactly what she needed.



As I listened, I realized that I was that visiting teacher. I thought back on that morning, trying to remember why I had decided to take bread over at that time. I hadn't heard a voice or felt a burning in the bosom. I just woke up that day and felt like making bread.

As I was preparing the loaves, I thought of a sister in our ward who was ill. I had felt helpless throughout her illness because I didn't know what I could do to relieve her suffering. The thought came to my mind that I should take her a loaf of bread. I tried to talk myself out of it because the loaves turned out somewhat

misshapen. But when I tasted one, it seemed fine. "At least she will know that I was thinking about her," I thought.

I wrapped the warm, odd-looking loaf, and took it to her house. As I presented it to her, she smiled and thanked me but refused my offer of further assistance. I went home feeling good but still concerned that I hadn't helped much.

Months later, when I heard her testimony, I understood that the Holy Ghost had prompted me in answer to her prayers. This experience taught me a great lesson about the importance of responding to the promptings of the Spirit. If an idea comes to us to do something good, we should do it. The Savior said, "Whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me; for good cometh of none save it be of me" (Ether 4:12).

Anytime we have a thought to do good, we can assume that it comes

from the Spirit. We never know how important such promptings can be. I had no idea that a loaf of homemade bread would be an answer to a prayer that would strengthen a testimony. And when the sister was prompted to share her experience in Relief Society, she had no idea of the valuable lesson I learned about recognizing the Spirit. ■

I had no idea that a loaf of homemade bread would be an answer to prayer and would strengthen a testimony.

DID I REALLY KNOW?

By Justin Geracitano

After an eventful evening in Australia in 1998, my best mate asked if I could give him a lift. On our way to his home, our conversation turned to our basic beliefs. He was an atheist, and I was a Latter-day Saint. I had always known that there was a God; he had always believed that there was no God.

That evening I did something I had never done before. Just before I dropped off my friend, I told him I know that God lives, that Jesus is our Savior, and that Joseph Smith saw Them in vision.

I had often talked about these things with him, but I had never told him that I knew them to be true. I realized, however, that if I were to leave him with a lasting impression, I would have to leave him with my testimony of these things.

As he opened the car door, he shook my hand and said, “Hey, man, that’s cool. We all need to be firm in our beliefs.”

The problem, however, is that I didn’t know—not really. At the time, it felt right to say those things, but I had never received a spiritual confirmation of their truthfulness.

I had a 20-minute drive home. Those 20 minutes changed my life. As I reviewed our conversation, I started to think about my life and the direction I was headed. While I was thinking, the hymn “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” came into my mind and penetrated my soul. I started to sing aloud:

I felt right bearing my testimony of these things, but I had never received a spiritual confirmation of their truthfulness.

*I know that my Redeemer lives.
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, he lives,*

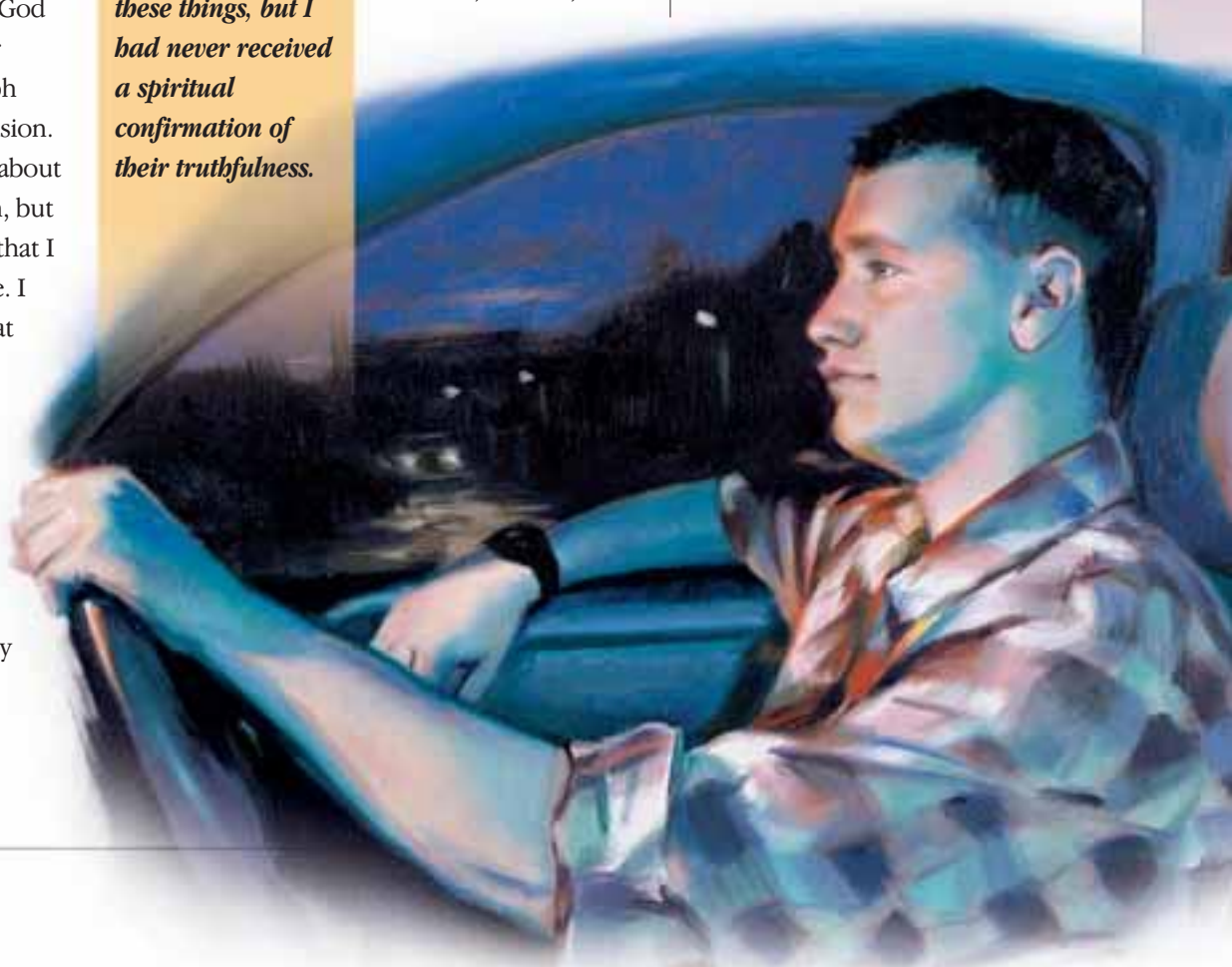
*who once was dead.
He lives, my ever-living Head.¹*

As I sang, tears came to my eyes as the Spirit witnessed to me the truthfulness of those words and confirmed that my testimony was true. I realized then that a testimony can be found in the bearing of it.²

I will never forget the Spirit witnessing to me the truthfulness of my testimony. I know that my Redeemer lives because the Spirit witnessed it to my soul—a witness I was happy to share a short time later as a full-time missionary. ■

NOTES

1. Hymns, no. 136.
2. See Boyd K. Packer, “The Quest for Spiritual Knowledge,” *Liabona*, Jan. 2007, 18; *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 6.



ADVENTURE IN A BAG

Give a gift bag. No, not the paper kind you put gifts in, but an actual bag. For starters, you could use backpacks, fanny packs, canvas bags, or a leather pouch. Then fill it with gifts for some fun exploring. That's what my parents did for us children, and now they do it for their grandchildren too.

For our most adventurous activities, we might receive bags filled with a pocket knife for whittling (a gift for older children, of course), a flashlight, work gloves, a first-aid kit, bandanas, note pads for recording finds or

experiences, food, and love notes from Grandma and Grandpa. The list could go on and on. We have sailing bags, hiking fanny packs, gardening bags, spur-of-the-moment sports bags. And we can't forget bags for walks, bike rides, and long car trips.

If assembling these bags seems expensive, just give the bag as a present and let the recipient decide what goes in, or fill it later during an outing. Our children love to fill their bags with treasures of shells, pine cones, rocks, flowers, and so on. These gift bags have been a fun tradition for our

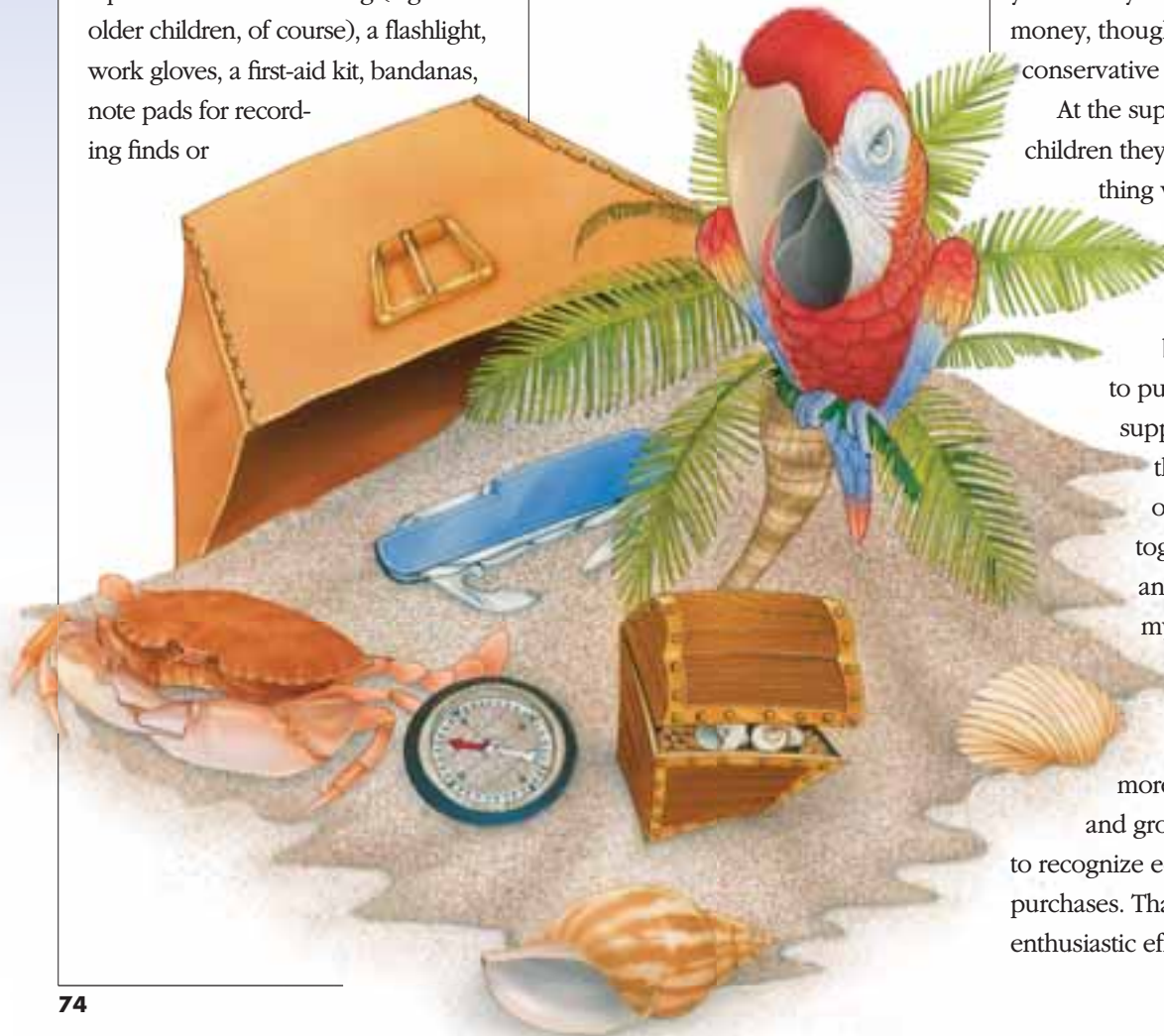
family, and they've helped us to create many lasting memories.

Dori Lee Hall, Utah

DOLLAR DINNERS

What if you gave your children a few dollars to buy something for tonight's supper? Would they choose wisely? Maybe it's time to find out. I first did this activity with my children in the 1970s, when a dollar bought more. Since times have changed, you'll likely want to allot a little more money, though I would still suggest a conservative amount.

At the supermarket, I told the children they could purchase anything with their dollar that they wanted for supper. Some of them bought sweets; others combined their resources to purchase items for a tasty supper. We all enjoyed the meal and the fun of shopping and eating together. I also recognized an opportunity to teach my children more. In the days that followed, my husband and I began to help them become more experienced cooks and grocery shoppers, learning to recognize economical, healthy food purchases. Thanks to my children's enthusiastic efforts, our next dollar



dinner, a few months later, provided another fun and interesting meal together—and an even more nutritious, satisfying experience.

Jean E. Lyman, New Mexico

WHEN ADULT CHILDREN RETURN HOME

Job loss, divorce, schooling—all are reasons an adult child may return home, sometimes bringing a family with them. What do you, as parents, do?

Of course you want to help your children, but you wonder how to make it work. While you want to offer love and support, you don't want to foster unhealthy dependency.

Below are some suggestions for making the best of the situation. Circumstances can vary widely, so the following list is not intended to be exhaustive or to apply to every situation.

1. Make expectations and rules clear at the beginning. Will the single daughter who has been away at college for the last four years be expected to call if she's going to be late from a date? What of the son who has no car? Will he be allowed to use the family vehicle? The rules may change according to the age of the child, family resources, and other circumstances. Some parents make up a written agreement, spelling out the expectations on both parts.



Roommates 101

Living away from home with new roommates can be challenging. But there are things you can do to make the adjustment easier. Our singles family home evening group brainstormed ideas that have helped us to enjoy positive roommate experiences.

Maintain open communication. Being able to talk with roommates sincerely but with kindness is key. Initiate an apartment meeting to establish expectations for all. Earn your roommates' trust by listening intently and being honest with them and respectful of them.

Figure out the finances. Decide who will pay which bills, if applicable, and pay your share promptly.

Keep it clean. Everyone appreciates those who do their share of the chores and keep their personal space tidy. You'll

benefit by feeling better and being more organized too. Having a clean apartment can reduce chaos and stress, thus creating an inviting environment for the Spirit to dwell. Never allow anyone or anything into your home that would negatively impact the spiritual cleanliness.

Be unselfish. Most serious students focus primarily on school and preparing for their future. This is important, but we must also remember to help one another when we can. Something as simple as folding your roommate's laundry or helping wash dishes can go a long way in establishing a good relationship.

Learning to get along with others is a 101 course for life. And what better time to start than now?

Nathan Justis, Utah



2. Address financial matters up front. Will the adult child pay rent? How much? How will the cost of food be handled? What about utilities? Some families handle the matter by having the parents buy the food and the child pay the utilities. Decide what works for you.

3. Decide how grandchildren will be handled. Will you, the grandparents, be expected to babysit? If so, will you receive monetary compensation? Grandparents often welcome the opportunity to spend more time with their grandchildren but may not

wish to become full-time babysitters. Jobs, other obligations, and health issues may prevent that arrangement.

4. Establish a time frame. Come to an agreement with your child on how many months (or years) he or she will be living at home.

5. Respect each other's privacy. Everyone needs and deserves privacy, including the parents of returning children. Decide if certain areas of the house are off-limits. Establish limits of conduct, content, and behavior in your home.

Jane McBride Choate, Colorado

Perpetual Education Fund a Growing Miracle

By Molly Farmer, Church Magazines

As a recently returned missionary, Brother Viwe Xozwa's schedule was demanding. The education-driven convert in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, attended school from 8 a.m. to noon, worked from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., then studied until 8 p.m. or 9 p.m. on a regular basis.

Brother Xozwa was never bothered or upset by the busy schedule he maintained, though. In fact, he was grateful just for the opportunity he had to study and learn, which was made possible by others' generosity.

Brother Xozwa is a recipient of a Perpetual Education Fund (PEF) loan, which made obtaining an education a more realistic possibility than it would have otherwise been. Now a 27-year-old computer engineer and the executive secretary in his stake, he attributes many of his blessings to the PEF.

"I would not be where I am right now in my life if that inspired program was not established," he said.

A Chance to Overcome

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) announced the PEF at general conference in March 2001. The program was designed to help young people obtain skills that would allow them and their families to rise above poverty and make



The Perpetual Education Fund helps match young adult members with educational opportunities.

meaningful contributions to society and the Church.

In many nations throughout the world, young missionaries with modest backgrounds faithfully serve the Lord. In his address, President Hinckley spoke of the challenges these young people face when they return home:

"Their hopes are high. But many of them have great difficulty finding employment because they have no skills. They sink right back into the pit of poverty from which they came" ("The Perpetual

Education Fund," *Ensign*, May 2001, 51).

Based on the same principles as the Perpetual Emigration Fund, which enabled Saints to travel to the Salt Lake Valley in the 1800s, Church leaders hope the PEF program will help end persistent poverty.

By providing loans for vocational, technical, and professional training at a low interest rate, the program gives ambitious participants between the ages of 18 and 30 a chance to learn employment skills as well as

self-reliance and independence without accruing a lot of debt.

Elder John K. Carmack, an emeritus member of the Quorum of the Seventy and Executive Director of the PEF, said the program facilitates learning and advancement for young people who just need a chance and some direction.

"We help the young people dream, we help them plan their careers, and we help them achieve," Elder Carmack said.

Opening Doors

While he always planned to attend college, Brother Xozwa and his mother lacked the funds to pay for school. A conventional bank loan was a possibility, though higher interest rates would have made it very costly and would have taken a long time to pay off. Instead, Brother Xozwa heard about the PEF from a Church Educational System couple in his area. He applied for and received a \$1,150 PEF loan and enrolled in computer engineering classes at Damelin College in Port Elizabeth.

After about a year of study, Brother Xozwa was offered a job at an IT consulting firm. The company waited for him to finish up the school year and supported him in his continued studies. Because of his employment, he was able to pay off his loan the following year, and the company has sponsored his further studies for the past four years in disciplines such as labor relations, corporate governance, business administration and

management, and advanced project management.

"The PEF program gave me the initial kickstart that I needed, and the rest I could do on my own," he said. "It gave me an initial boost; everything else just opened up."

A Miracle with More to Come

Since President Hinckley first announced the program seven years ago, about 28,000 young people, approximately half of them men and half of them women, have received PEF loans. The program premiered in Mexico, Peru, and Chile, and has now expanded to assist people in 40 countries throughout the world, including Mongolia, Cambodia, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, some Pacific islands, and virtually all of Latin America.

The program is funded both by members, who allocate funds toward the program on their tithes and offerings slips, and by friends of the Church who believe in the program's purpose. The money collected (the principal) is never spent, with loans being made only from the interest earned on the principal.

"The members and friends [of the Church] have been extremely generous," Elder Carmack said, adding that both President Hinckley and President Monson have called the program's success "a miracle."

"We have grown," Elder Carmack said, and he expects the Church will see "more growth ahead."



Once PEF participants find employment they are able to repay their loans so others can benefit.

Repaying Sacred Funds

Knowing where his loan came from made Brother Xozwa dedicate himself completely to doing well in school and paying off his loan. He wanted to use the generous donations the best way he could.

"I realized these were sacred funds. Others had made a contribution to my education, so it was my responsibility to show appreciation by studying hard," he said. "The money that was granted me was not mine to play around with. I was given the opportunity to make something of my life, to kickstart a good future, and it was my responsibility to grab that opportunity with both hands and not fail."

In addition to giving young adults financial opportunities, the PEF enables them to grow in the gospel and strengthen their countries and other members in need of an opportunity for education. Some graduates of the program have gone on to become leaders of the Church,

Elder Carmack said, and are fortifying the Church in their countries.

"As faithful members of the Church, they will pay their tithes and offerings, and the Church will be much the stronger for their presence in the areas where they live," President Hinckley said (*Ensign*, May 2001, 51).

As students repay their loans, the money goes back into the fund to aid other individuals who need help



A PEF loan helped Viwe Xozwa of South Africa.

financing their education, making it a "perpetual" fund.

Doing Wonders for Yourself and Others

Brother Xozwa understood this principle and was motivated to help others receive the same opportunities he had.

"The Lord is giving you the opportunity to progress, but also to help the next person," he said. "It was my responsibility to repay the money as soon as possible so that the next person could have an equally good chance to study and progress. Think of how many people you can influence if you use the funds correctly. You can do wonders not just for you but for other people."

His experience has taught him leadership skills and independence in addition to self-reliance and the ability to keep commitments.

"It's not just education. It's not just getting a diploma or getting a degree. It's not just a career. It's so much more than that. It opens doors for you to grow individually," he said.

Pocket Change Changing Generations

Brother Xozwa said he will be forever grateful for the generosity extended to him that made a world of difference in his life.

"I would love one day to meet the person or the people who contributed to the program in the initial stages just to say thank you," he said. "Maybe it was pocket change for them, but it changed generations. It has changed my family." ■

New Area Leadership Assignments

The First Presidency has announced changes in area leadership assignments effective on August 1, 2008. All members of Area Presidencies are members of the First or Second Quorums of the Seventy unless otherwise noted.

Elder L. Whitney Clayton and Elder Jay E. Jensen have been called to serve in the Presidency of the Seventy following the call of Elder D. Todd Christofferson to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Elder Earl C. Tingey's release from the Presidency.

The First Presidency has also announced the combining of the Europe Central and Europe West Areas and the Australia and New Zealand/Pacific Islands Areas. The new areas will be called the Europe Area and the Pacific Area. The North America East Area has been divided between the North America Northeast and North America Southeast Areas. ■

Presidency of the Seventy



NEIL L. ANDERSEN
1. NORTH AMERICA SOUTHWEST



RONALD A. RASBAND
2. UTAH NORTH
3. UTAH SALT LAKE CITY
4. UTAH SOUTH



CLAUDIO R. M. COSTA
5. IDAHO



STEVEN E. SNOW
6. NORTH AMERICA CENTRAL



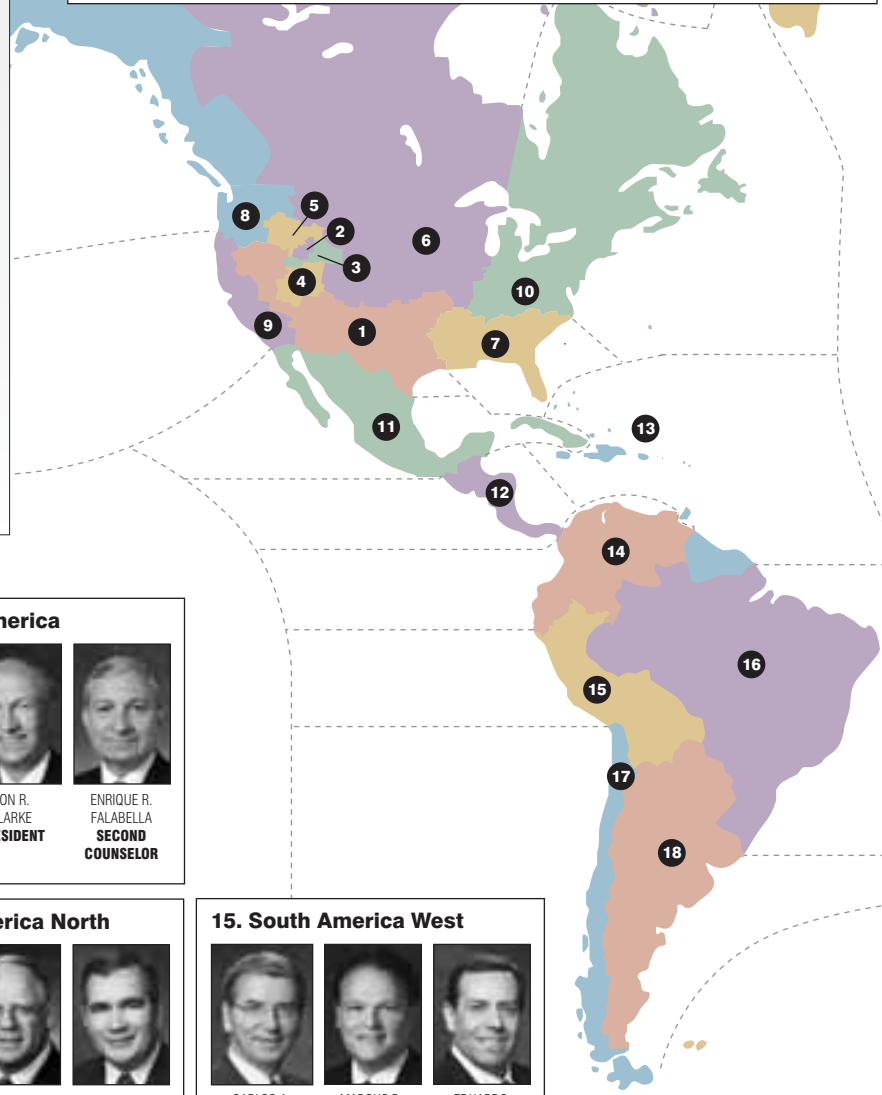
WALTER F. GONZÁLEZ
7. NORTH AMERICA SOUTHEAST



L. WHITNEY CLAYTON
8. NORTH AMERICA NORTHWEST
9. NORTH AMERICA WEST



JAY E. JENSEN
10. NORTH AMERICA NORTHEAST



11. Mexico



C. SCOTT GROW
FIRST COUNSELOR

LYNN A. MICKELSEN
PRESIDENT

OCTAVIANO TENORIO
SECOND COUNSELOR

12. Central America



SHIRLEY D. CHRISTENSEN
FIRST COUNSELOR

DON R. CLARKE
PRESIDENT

ENRIQUE R. FALABELLA
SECOND COUNSELOR

13. Caribbean



FRANCISCO J. VIÑAS
FIRST COUNSELOR

DANIEL L. JOHNSON
PRESIDENT

MIGUEL A. LEE*
SECOND COUNSELOR

14. South America North



BENJAMÍN DE HOYOS
FIRST COUNSELOR

CARL B. PRATT
PRESIDENT

RAFAEL E. PINO
SECOND COUNSELOR

15. South America West



CARLOS A. GODOY
FIRST COUNSELOR

MARCUS B. NASH
PRESIDENT

EDUARDO GAVARRET
SECOND COUNSELOR

16. Brazil



ULISSES SOARES
FIRST COUNSELOR

CHARLES DIDIER
PRESIDENT

STANLEY G. ELLIS
SECOND COUNSELOR

17. Chile



LAWRENCE E. CORBRIDGE
FIRST COUNSELOR

CARLOS H. AMADO
PRESIDENT

JORGE F. ZEBALLOS
SECOND COUNSELOR

18. South America South



CLAUDIO D. ZIVIC
FIRST COUNSELOR

SHAYNE M. BOWEN
PRESIDENT

MARCOS A. AIDUKAITIS
SECOND COUNSELOR

19. Europe



ERICH W. KOPISCHKE
FIRST COUNSELOR

ROBERT C. OAKS
PRESIDENT

GÉRALD CAUSSÉ
SECOND COUNSELOR

20. Europe East



WOLFGANG H. PAUL
FIRST COUNSELOR

PAUL B. PIEPER
PRESIDENT

LARRY W. GIBBONS
SECOND COUNSELOR

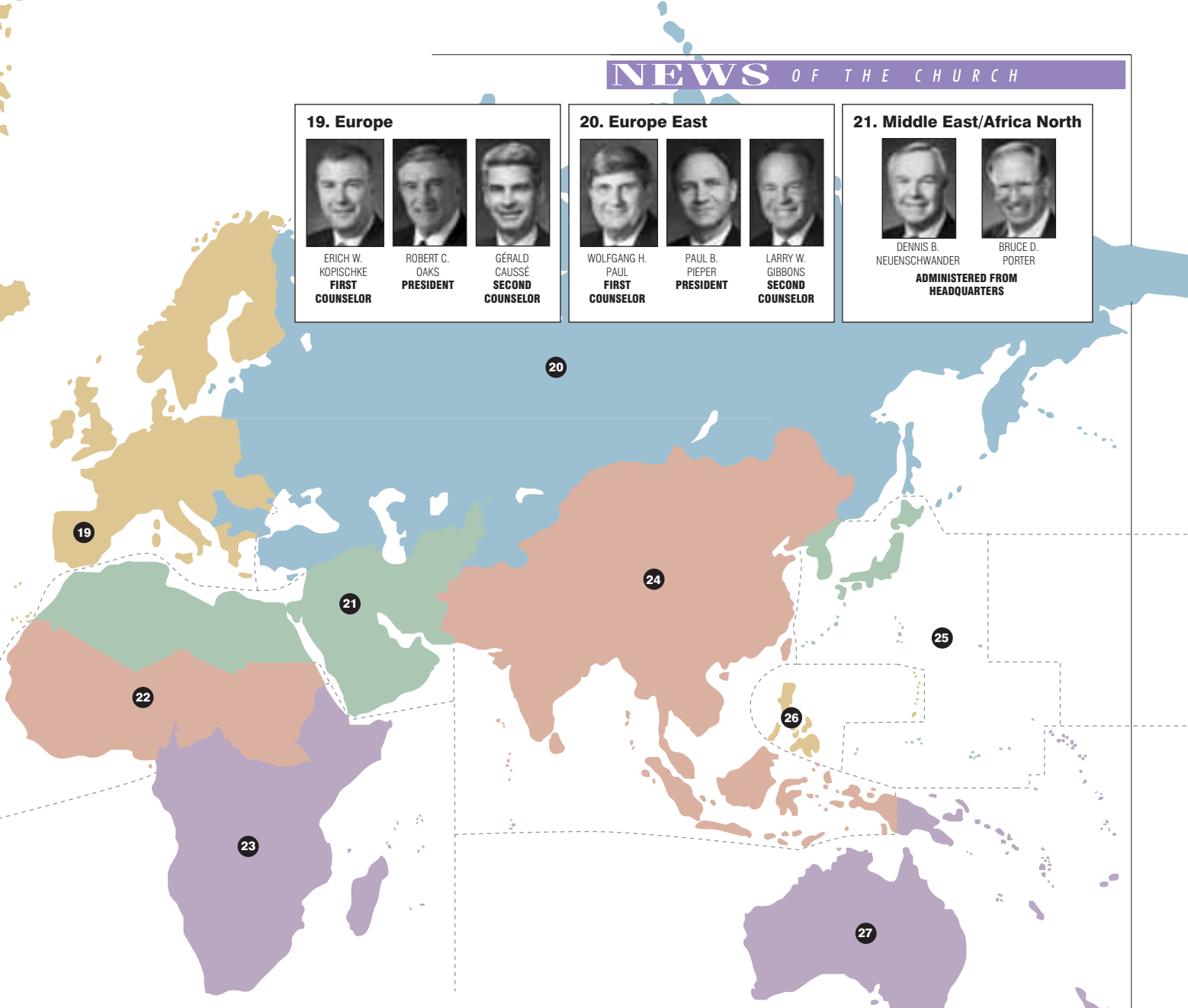
21. Middle East/Africa North



DENNIS B. NEUENSCHWANDER

BRUCE D. PORTER

ADMINISTERED FROM HEADQUARTERS



22. Africa West



CRAIG A. CARDON
FIRST COUNSELOR

LOWELL M. SNOW
PRESIDENT

CHRISTOFFEL GOLDEN JR.
SECOND COUNSELOR

23. Africa Southeast



PAUL E. KOELLIKER
FIRST COUNSELOR

WILLIAM W. PARMLEY
PRESIDENT

F. MICHAEL WATSON
SECOND COUNSELOR

24. Asia



ANTHONY D. PERKINS
FIRST COUNSELOR

DONALD L. HALLSTROM
PRESIDENT

KENT D. WATSON
SECOND COUNSELOR

25. Asia North



GARY E. STEVENSON
FIRST COUNSELOR

DAVID F. EVANS
PRESIDENT

YOON HWAN CHOI*
SECOND COUNSELOR

26. Philippines



WON YONG KO
FIRST COUNSELOR

KEITH R. EDWARDS
PRESIDENT

MICHAEL JOHN U. TEH
SECOND COUNSELOR

27. Pacific



KEITH K. HILBIG
FIRST COUNSELOR

DAVID S. BAXTER
PRESIDENT

TAD R. CALLISTER
SECOND COUNSELOR

Comment

Ideal Missionary Tool

As soon as we saw the beautiful March *Ensign* we decided to get additional copies for nonmember

friends and family. It felt like the most ideal missionary tool to share the message of Easter.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to get a single additional copy of it, because the distribution center at the

Preston England Temple sold out as soon as supplies arrived.

If you plan to do a similar wonderful *Ensign* in December to celebrate the Savior's birth, please will you make enough copies available

for members like myself in England, and in time for us to be able to mail them or hand deliver them before Christmas.

Christine Chadwick, England

Editor's Note: *We planned for a heavy demand for extra copies, but demand exceeded even our expectations. There have been two additional printings, and copies of the March issue should be available through distribution centers and stores (including those in the U.K.) or online at www.ldscatalog.com for those living in the U.S. and Canada. The timeless nature of this issue makes it suitable for giving at Christmas and Easter and for year-round activation and missionary work.*

Conference Memories

One wonderful memory of Grandma, who passed away two years ago at age 93, was of her sitting in front of her television on general conference weekends, dressed in her Sunday best and raising her hand to sustain the prophet and those serving with him. Inspired by a suggestion in *Random Sampler* in the April 2008 issue (page 75), we came together as a family on Grandma's birthday to hold a general conference review where all were invited to share their thoughts on a conference talk. It was a very positive experience, and we hope it was the beginning of a wonderful new family tradition. Thank you!

Cindy Thomas, Utah

WORLD BRIEFS

President Monson Dedicates Temple, Meets Leaders

President Thomas S. Monson dedicated the Curitiba Brazil Temple in four sessions on Sunday,



Curitiba Brazil Temple

June 1, 2008, the day after thousands of members filled a soccer stadium for a cultural celebration attended by the prophet.

The Curitiba temple becomes the fifth in the country of about one million members. More than 42,000 people visited the

temple open house. On Monday, President Monson met with Brazil's vice president, Jose Alancar.

President Uchtdorf Meets European Saints

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, met with members of the Church and guests in three European countries during a tour of England, Germany, and France at the end of May and beginning of June 2008.

He told members in France: "We are all united, all brothers and sisters. The gospel is the answer to the challenges in the world, to all questions faced by families, communities, and nations."

President Monson Announces Three Temples in Arizona

President Thomas S. Monson has announced plans for three new temples in Arizona, USA. On April 28, 2008, he announced temples in Gilbert and Gila Valley, Arizona. On May 24, he announced a temple in Phoenix.

The temples bring the number in Arizona to five, and the worldwide total to 140, while alleviating usage of the Mesa Arizona Temple,

which is attended by more members than any temple outside of Utah.

Elder J. Thomas Fyans Dies

Elder J. Thomas Fyans, an emeritus General Authority, died on May 18, 2008. Born on May 17, 1918, in Moreland, Idaho, he married Helen Cook on May 28, 1943.

He served as president of the Uruguay Mission from 1960 to 1964, as an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles from 1974 to 1976, in the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy from 1976 to 1986, and as president of the St. George Temple from 1992 to 1995 after receiving emeritus status in 1989.



Elder J. Thomas Fyans



Sacramento California Temple, by Sandra Rast

“The Prophet Elijah was to plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to their fathers, foreshadowing the great work to be done in the temples of the Lord in the dispensation of the fulness of times, for the redemption of the dead, and the sealing of the children to their parents, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse and utterly wasted at his coming” (D&C 138:47–48).



“Our purposes in mortality are to learn through our experiences, whatever they may be, to choose good over evil and to become more like our Father in Heaven. Being single longer than we plan to be can help us accomplish these goals if we allow the Lord to work with us through our trials.” See “Single and Steadfast: Lessons in Hope,” p. 20.

