

ENSIGN



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Christ with the Doctors in the Temple, by David Lindsley



“And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers” (Luke 2:46–47).

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PRINTING DIRECTOR: Kay W. Briggs
DISTRIBUTION DIRECTOR: Kris T. Christensen
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TO SUBSCRIBE: Send \$10.00 U.S. check or money order for the *Ensign* (pronounced N'sign) to Church Magazines at address below. Credit card orders (American Express, MasterCard, Visa, Discover Card) are accepted by phone

at 1-800-537-5971. The *Ensign Talking Book*, for individuals with visual impairment or physical disability, is available free of charge or through donations.
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TO CHANGE ADDRESSES: Old address as well as new is needed. Call the subscription helpline at 1-800-537-5971, or send changes to the address below.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Salt Lake Distribution Center Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368 Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.
CANADA POST INFORMATION
Publication Agreement #40017431

Preparing the Way



BY PRESIDENT
THOMAS S. MONSON
First Counselor in the First Presidency

I love the work of the Primary, wherein teachers instruct little children to walk in the light of the gospel of Christ. They teach each child to sing with personal conviction:

*I am a child of God. . . .
Lead me, guide me, walk beside me,
Help me find the way.
Teach me all that I must do
To live with him someday.¹*

Part of the great love of Primary teachers is preparing boys to receive the Aaronic Priesthood and to walk uprightly along the Scouting trail.

Under their direction, Primary children are asked to commit to memory the Articles of Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You remember them. May I mention just two:

“We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.”²

“We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.”³

Can you think of a more firm foundation, a more basic philosophy to guide any of us than the Articles of Faith? What a gift teachers impart when they expect each child to know and indeed live by such a standard. They personally accept the divine injunction, “Feed my sheep; feed my lambs.”⁴

Some may inquire: What is the significance of the Aaronic Priesthood for which such preparation takes place? Is it all that important in the life of a boy? The

Priesthood of Aaron “is an appendage to the . . . Melchizedek Priesthood, and has power in administering outward ordinances.”⁵ John the Baptist was a descendant of Aaron and held the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood. Perhaps we could review the life and mission of John so that the importance of the Aaronic Priesthood might be more fully appreciated.

Long years ago and distant miles away, in the conquered country of Palestine, a marvelous miracle occurred. The setting was bleak, the time one of tumult. In these, the days of Herod, king of Judea, there lived a priest named Zacharias and his wife, Elisabeth. “They were . . . righteous before God.”⁶ However, long years of yearning had returned no reward—Zacharias and Elisabeth remained childless.

Then came that day of days ever to be remembered. There appeared to Zacharias the angel Gabriel, who proclaimed: “Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. . . .

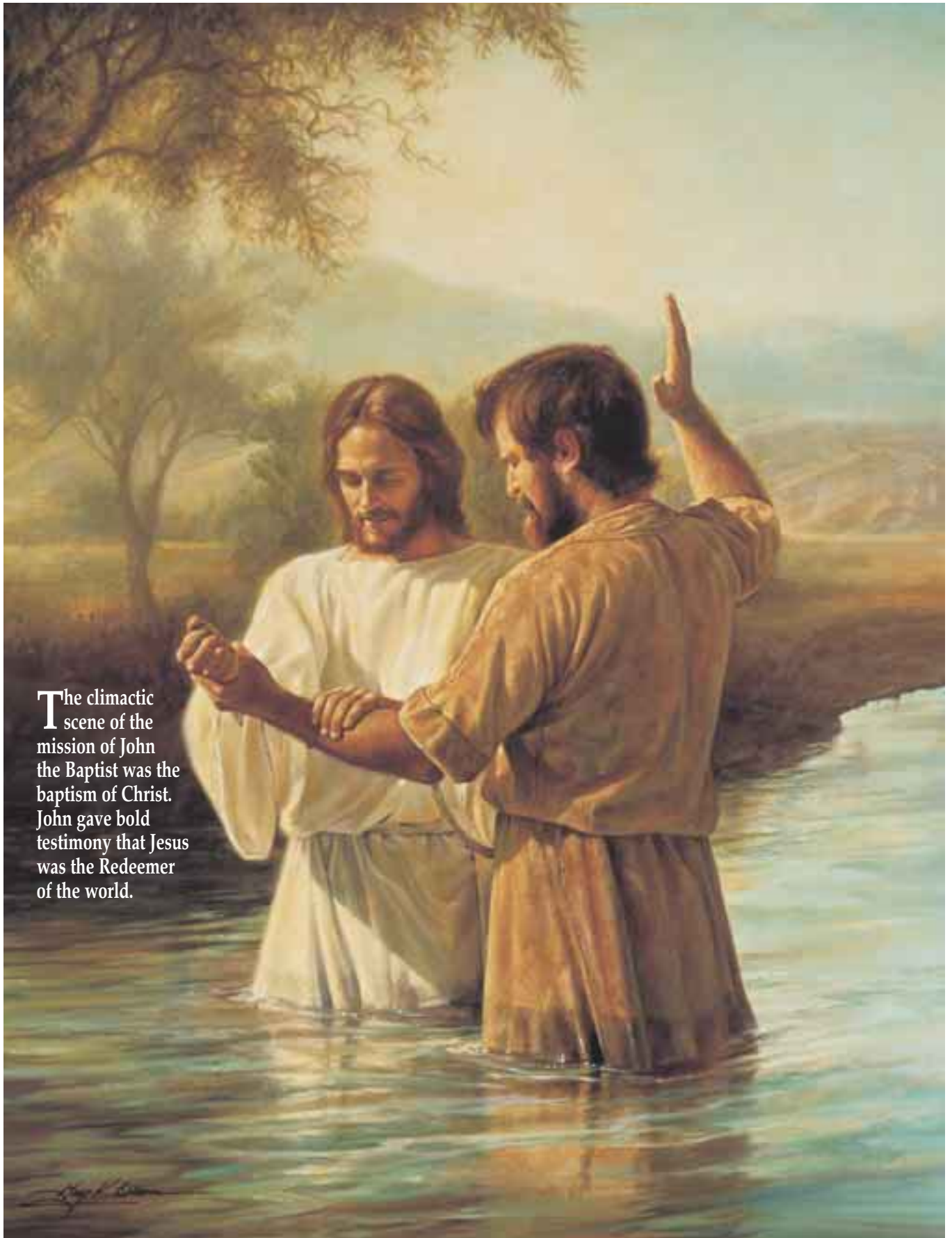
“ . . . He shall be great in the sight of the Lord.”⁷

Elisabeth did conceive. In due time a son was born, and according to the angel’s instruction he was named John.

As with the Master, Jesus Christ, so with the servant, John—precious little is recorded of their years of youth. A single sentence contains all that we know of John’s history for a space of 30 years—the entire period which elapsed between his birth and his walk into the wilderness to commence his public ministry: “The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.”⁸

His dress was that of the old prophets—a garment woven of camel’s hair. His food was such as the desert afforded—locusts and wild honey. His message was brief. He preached faith, repentance, baptism by immersion, and the bestowal of the Holy Ghost by an authority greater than possessed by himself.

“I am not the Christ,” he told his band of faithful disciples, “but . . . I am sent before him.”⁹ “I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh.”¹⁰ “He



The climactic scene of the mission of John the Baptist was the baptism of Christ. John gave bold testimony that Jesus was the Redeemer of the world.

JOIN THE BAPTIST BAPTIZING JESUS CHRIST BY GREG OLSEN

shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”¹¹

Then there transpired the climactic scene of John’s mission—the baptism of Christ. Jesus came down from Galilee expressly “to be baptized” by John. Humbled of heart and contrite in spirit, John pleaded, “I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” The Master’s reply: “It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”¹²

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

“And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”¹³

John’s testimony that Jesus was the Redeemer of the world was declared boldly. Without fear, and with courage, John taught, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”¹⁴

Of John, the Savior later testified, “Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.”¹⁵

John’s public ministry moved toward its close. He had, at the beginning of it, condemned the hypocrisy and worldliness of the Pharisees and Sadducees; and he now had occasion to denounce the lust of a king. The result is well known. A king’s weakness and a woman’s fury combined to bring about the death of John.

The tomb in which his body was placed could not contain that body. Nor could the act of murder still that voice. To the world we declare that at Harmony, Pennsylvania, on 15 May 1829, an angel “who announced himself as John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament” came as a resurrected personage to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. “The angel explained that he was acting under the direction of Peter, James, and John, the ancient apostles, who held the keys of the higher priesthood, which was called the Priesthood of Melchizedek.”¹⁶ The Aaronic Priesthood was restored to the earth.

Thanks to that memorable event, I was given the privilege to bear the Aaronic Priesthood, as have millions of young men in these latter days. Its true significance was taught me by my former stake president, the late Paul C. Child.

When I was approaching my 18th birthday and preparing to enter military service in World War II, I was recommended to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. Mine was the task of telephoning President Child for an appointment and interview. He was one who loved and understood the holy scriptures. It was his intent that all others should similarly love and understand them. Knowing from others of his rather detailed and searching interviews, our telephone conversation went something like this:

“Hello, President Child. This is Brother Monson.

I have been asked by the bishop to seek an interview with you.”

“Fine, Brother Monson. When can you visit me?”

Knowing that his sacrament meeting time was six o’clock, and desiring minimum exposure of my scriptural knowledge to his review, I suggested, “How would five o’clock be?”

His response: “Oh, Brother Monson, that would not provide us sufficient time to peruse the scriptures. Could you please come at two o’clock and bring with you your personally marked and referenced set of scriptures.”

Sunday finally arrived, and I visited President Child’s home on Indiana Avenue. I was greeted warmly, and then the interview began. He said: “Brother Monson, you hold the Aaronic Priesthood. Have you ever had angels minister to you?”

My reply was, “No, President Child.”

“Do you know,” said he, “that you are entitled to such?”

Again came my response: “No.”

Then he instructed, “Brother Monson, repeat from memory the 13th section of the Doctrine and Covenants.”

I began, “Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels . . .”¹⁷

“Stop,” President Child directed. Then in a calm, kindly tone he counseled: “Brother Monson, never forget that as a holder of the Aaronic Priesthood you are entitled to the ministering of angels.” It was almost as though an angel were in the room that day. I have never forgotten the interview. I yet feel the spirit of that solemn occasion. I revere the priesthood of Almighty God. I have witnessed its power. I have seen its strength. I have marveled at the miracles it has wrought.

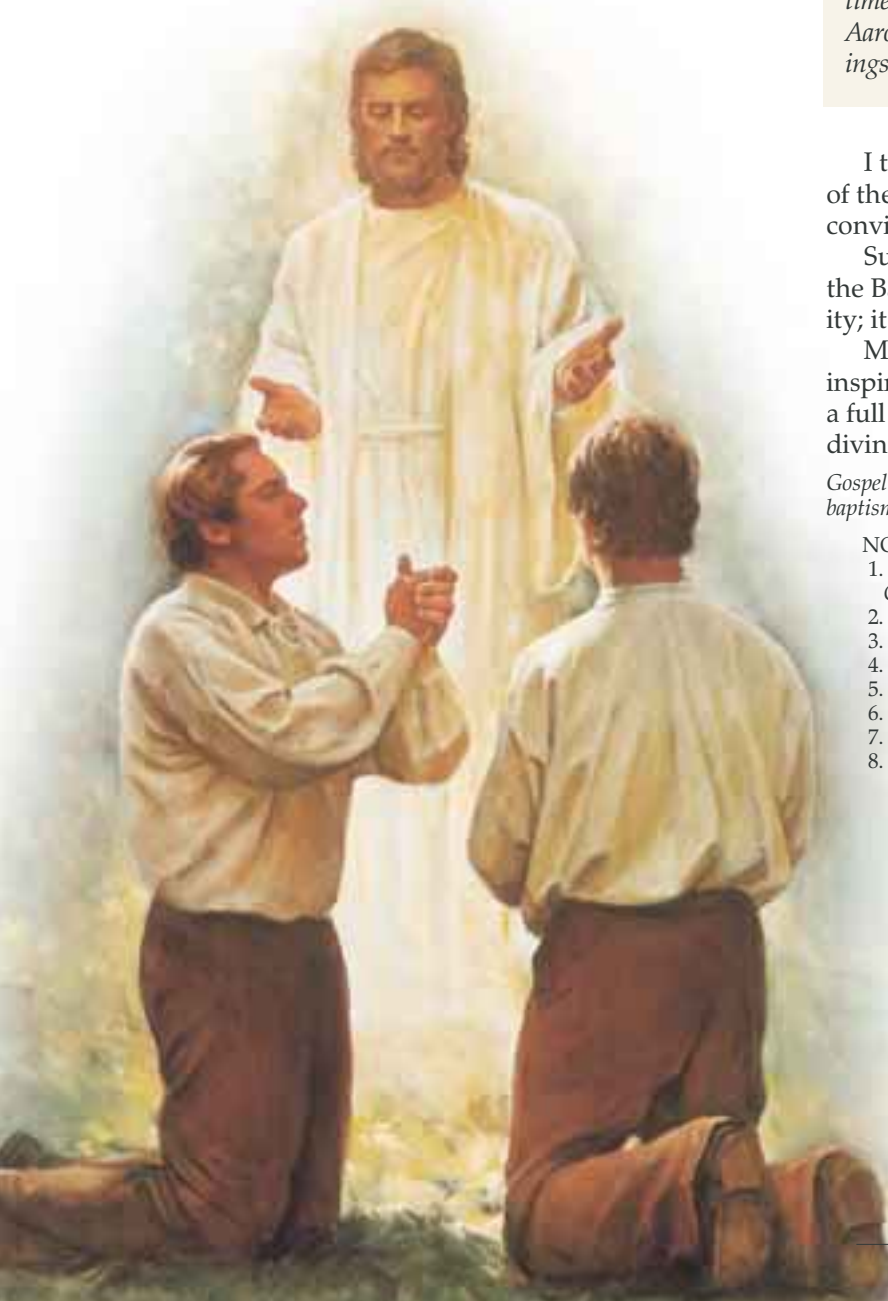
Almost 50 years ago I knew a boy, even a priest, who held the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood. As the bishop, I was his quorum president. This boy, Robert, stuttered and stammered, void of control. Self-conscious, shy, fearful of himself and all others, he had an impediment of speech which was devastating to him. Never did he fulfill an assignment; never would he look another in the eye; always would he gaze downward. Then one day, through a set of unusual circumstances, he accepted an assignment to perform the priestly responsibility to baptize another.

I sat next to him in the baptistry of the sacred Tabernacle. He was dressed in immaculate white, prepared for the ordinance he was to perform. I asked Robert how he felt. He gazed at the floor and stuttered almost incoherently that he felt terrible.

We both prayed fervently that he would be made equal to his task. Then the clerk read the words: “Nancy Ann McArthur will now be baptized by

Robert Williams, a priest." Robert left my side, stepped into the font, took little Nancy by the hand, and helped her into the water which cleanses human lives and provides a spiritual rebirth. He then gazed as though toward heaven and, with his right arm to the square, repeated the words "Nancy Ann McArthur, having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."¹⁸ Not once did he stammer. Not once did he stutter. Not once did he falter. A modern miracle had been witnessed.

In the dressing room, as I congratulated Robert, I expected to hear this same uninterrupted flow of speech. I was wrong. He gazed downward and stammered his reply of gratitude.



IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

Preparation

After studying this message, prayerfully choose one or two statements from President Monson that you feel will most benefit those you teach. Then think of a teaching method or activity for each statement that is appropriate for the ages and circumstances of family members. A few examples of how this may be done are provided below.

Suggestions for Teaching

1. *From the summary on pages 2–4, make a list of events from the life of John the Baptist. Make another list of those events in random order and ask family members to put them in chronological order. Invite family members to tell what impresses them about John the Baptist. What are some ways we can follow his example today?*

2. *You may want to read aloud the story of Robert Williams on pages 4–5. Invite family members to tell about times when they have acted in or felt the power of the Aaronic Priesthood. Relate your feelings about the blessings of having the Aaronic Priesthood in the Church today.*

I testify that when Robert acted in the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood, he spoke with power, with conviction, and with heavenly help.

Such is the legacy of one called John, even John the Baptist. We hear his voice today. It teaches humility; it prompts courage; it inspires faith.

May we be motivated by his message. May we be inspired by his mission. May we be lifted by his life to a full appreciation of the Aaronic Priesthood and its divine power. □

Gospel topics: Aaronic Priesthood, angels, Articles of Faith, baptism, Primary

NOTES

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. "I Am a Child of God," <i>Children's Songbook</i> , 2–3. | 9. John 3:28. |
| 2. A of F 1:1. | 10. Luke 3:16. |
| 3. A of F 1:13. | 11. Matt. 3:11. |
| 4. See John 21:15–16. | 12. See Matt. 3:13–15. |
| 5. D&C 107:14. | 13. Matt. 3:16–17. |
| 6. Luke 1:6. | 14. John 1:29. |
| 7. Luke 1:13, 15. | 15. Matt. 11:11. |
| 8. Luke 1:80. | 16. D&C 13, section heading. |
| | 17. D&C 13:1. |
| | 18. See D&C 20:73. |

To the world we declare that at Harmony, Pennsylvania, on 15 May 1829, John the Baptist came as a resurrected personage to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

Newly refurbished exhibits focus on how the Lord's teachings and the words of His prophets can direct our lives.

The message is clear: We believe in Jesus Christ. We believe in doing what He taught. We believe in Him as the Savior of all mankind and as the head of the Church He has organized, a Church directed by prophets He has called.

This is the message you discover as you browse the recently remodeled North and South Visitors' Centers on Temple Square.

Thanks to the changes in the two visitors' centers, you can learn those things at your own pace, either with the help of the latest in interactive computerized displays or of missionary guides.

Exhibits in the North Visitors' Center focus on belief in Christ and His prophets through the ages. The *Christus* statue on the center's upper level still beckons to visitors

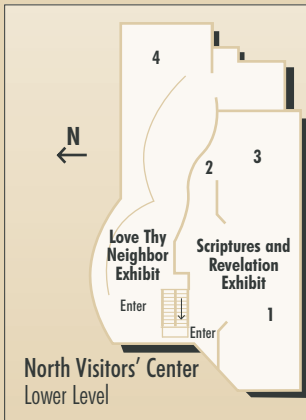
1. The Christus statue, North Visitors' Center upper level, allows visitors to contemplate the Savior's mission. 2. Paintings on the North Visitors' Center main level depict events in Christ's life. 3. A scale model of Jerusalem helps visitors locate the place of various events during the last days of the Savior's life.



We Believe



in Him



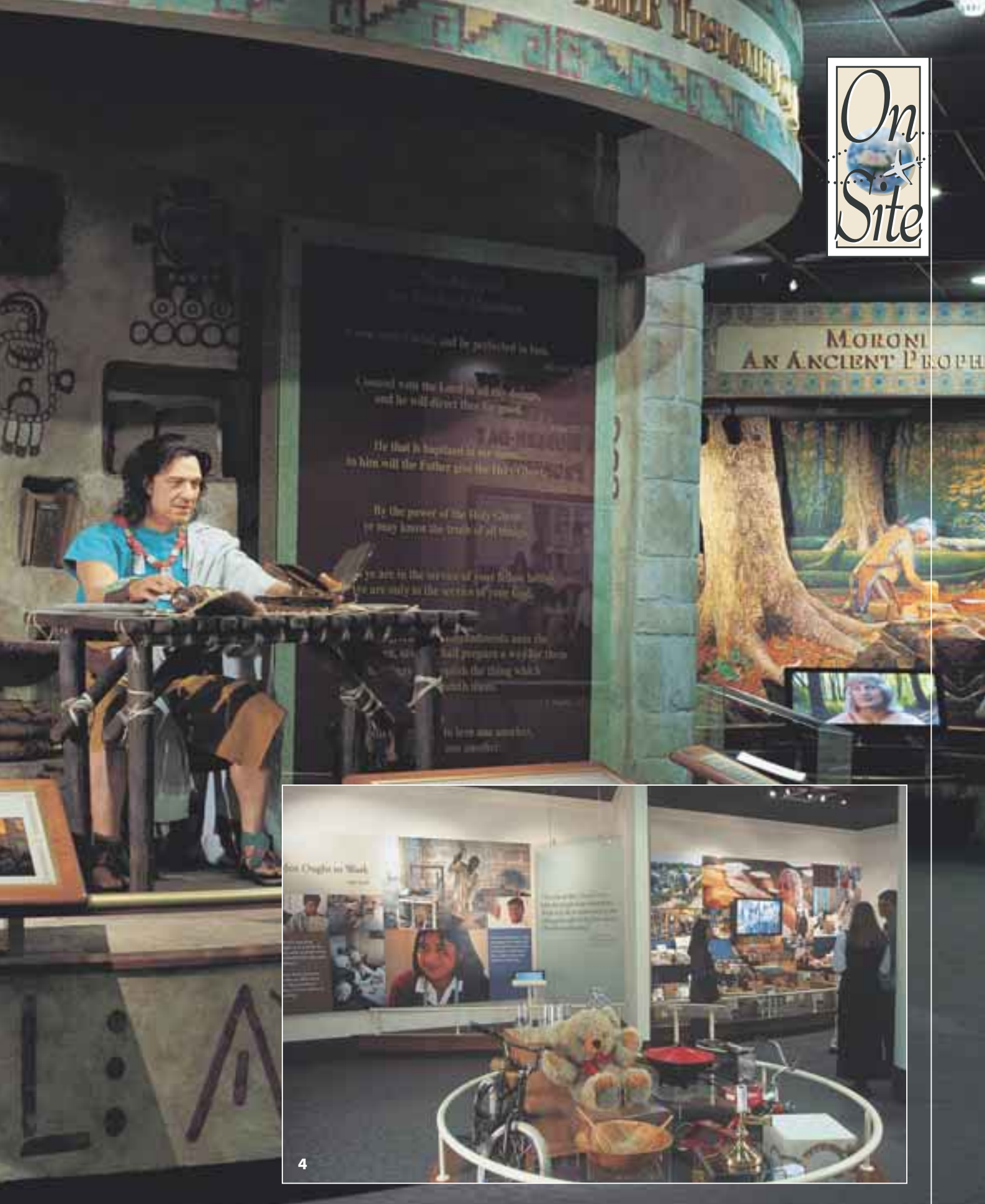
1. One diorama in the North Visitors' Center lower level depicts Mormon with ancient records. 2. Events in the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the importance of his mission are vividly portrayed. 3. The living prophet and apostles are the focus of one exhibit. 4. Obeying the Lord's commandments includes assisting others.

to consider what Jesus Christ and His sacrifice mean for them. New dioramas in the building depict what prophets have done under His direction. One display features today's prophets and apostles testifying of His gospel. Another display focuses on how we implement His teachings in caring for the poor and needy.

Exhibits in the South Visitors' Center focus on the importance of families and how they can be together forever through temple covenants made possible by the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is also a large display on the building of the Salt Lake Temple.

Computer technology used in new exhibits puts the visitor in control. By touching a selector screen for one of the displays, you could choose to watch a dramatization of the Lord giving the Ten Commandments to Moses. At another spot, you might select a narration explaining why members of The





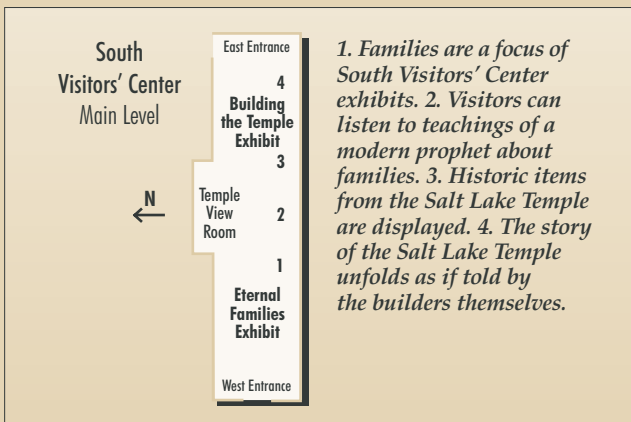
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Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints build and visit temples. You might watch a dramatization of an incident from the Book of Mormon with an explanation of how it can apply to your life, or a video clip from a talk by a living prophet or apostle teaching about a gospel principle. The design of the exhibits allows visitors to find answers to their own questions about Latter-day Saints and their beliefs.

Missionaries are close by to respond to visitors who want more information or to take guided tours.

The exhibits make the most of technological advances that have created exciting new ways to share the gospel. But the message they share remains the same: We believe in Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Lord. □

Gospel topics: Jesus Christ, sharing the gospel, prophets





Gifts OF THE

Spiritual gifts are given as a blessing and benefit for those who love God and keep His commandments.



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

The phrase “return with honor” is a very clear description of the purpose of life here in our mortal probation. In our premortal state in heaven, we lived in the presence

of God the Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost.

Our goal in coming to this mortal probation is to “return with honor” back into the presence of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost eternally. This is called eternal life. Eternal life is our goal at the end of our sojourn on earth.

After birth one of the most significant events in our life is baptism. The prophet Nephi describes baptism as a gate that we enter, after the gift of faith and repentance, to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. After entering the gate of baptism, we begin traveling a straight and narrow path that we remain on through our obedience, and that, if we endure to the end, leads us to eternal life (see 2 Ne. 31:17–21).

I’d like to discuss the role of the gifts of the Spirit that will help each of us achieve our goal of eternal life.

WHAT ARE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT?

These gifts of the Spirit are encompassed by the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the third member of the eternal Godhead and is identified as the Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit is a gift from God to help us make the decisions that will allow us to find and fulfill our mission. These gifts were part of the ministry of the

early prophets and were well known by the Apostles of the New Testament. Paul writes in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (12:4–10):

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

“And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

“And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

“To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

“To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.”

In these latter days, an understanding of the gifts of the Spirit has been given to us by revelation as recorded in section 46 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Section 46 identifies specific gifts of the Spirit as follows:

“For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God” (v. 11).

We are clearly instructed that each of us is given a gift or gifts. Do we know what gift we have been given? Are we seeking to find our gifts?

“To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby” (v. 12).

The phrase “that all may be profited thereby” is a very important concept to understand about the gifts of the Spirit. The gifts given to each individual are given not only for the one who receives, but also for



SPIRIT

We are clearly instructed that each of us is given a gift or gifts. Do we know what gift we have been given? Are we seeking to find our gifts?



those who can benefit when the gift is shared with others.

For example, you may be given the gift of faith and never question the existence of God, our Heavenly Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ.

“To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world.

“To others it is given to believe on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful” (vv. 13–14).

With the gift of faith, you may be given the gift of prophecy or testimony.

In addition, you may be given the gift that others would believe on your words, that they might have eternal life if they continue faithful. Many of you, as missionaries for the Church, have experienced all that I have just outlined. Or you may have brought a friend or neighbor into the Church by the way you have lived your life or through your testimony.

Other examples of the gifts that you have participated in are from verses 19 and 20:

“And again, to some it is given to have faith to be healed;

“And to others it is given to have faith to heal.”

There have been times when I have laid hands upon one who was ill and felt their spirit and their faith so strongly that they would be healed that I felt

There have been times when I have laid hands upon one who was ill and felt their spirit and their faith so strongly that they would be healed that I felt a surge of the power of their faith.

a surge of the power of their faith.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the faith to be healed is one of the greatest gifts an individual can have.

On the other hand, I have seen the faith of parents when fathers and mothers desired their children to be healed. Through great faith, their children have been blessed.

“And again, it is given to some to speak with tongues; “And to another is given the interpretation of tongues” (vv. 24–25).

Many of you who have gone to foreign lands have been given the gift to speak with tongues and to translate, or have the interpretation of tongues.

“And all these gifts come from God, for the benefit of the children of God” (v. 26).

We are told by prophets in this dispensation that revelation for the direction of the Church will not be given through the gift of tongues. The reason for this is that it is very easy for Lucifer to falsely duplicate the gift of tongues and confuse the members of the Church.

Satan has the power to trick us as it pertains to some of the gifts of the Spirit. One in which he is the most deceptive is the gift of tongues. Joseph Smith and Brigham Young (1801–77) explained the need to be cautious when considering the gift of tongues.

“You may speak in tongues for your own comfort, but I lay this down for a rule, that if anything is taught

by the gift of tongues, it is not to be received for doctrine" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 229).

"Speak not in the gift of tongues without understanding it, or without interpretation. The devil can speak in tongues" (*Teachings*, 162).

"The gift of tongues is not . . . empowered to dictate . . . the Church. All gifts and endowments given of the Lord to members of his Church are not given to control the Church; but they are under the control and guidance of the Priesthood, and are judged of by it" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, comp. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 343).

The gift of tongues is used by missionaries to teach the gospel to the nations of the world.

The gifts identified in section 46 give rise to other gifts, such as:

- The gift to ponder; looking to God for direction.
- The gift to hear and respond to the still, small voice.
- The gift to be calm, which includes the ability to curb anger and to be temperate rather than contentious.
- The gift to study and to listen.
- And, perhaps the greatest gift of all, to have charity.

There are many gifts. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote, "Spiritual gifts are endless in number and infinite in variety" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 371).

Of the sacred gifts of the Spirit, one that I believe has impact on each of our lives is the gift of prophecy or revelation. This gift is different from the priesthood office of prophet. The gift of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.

The Apostle Paul taught that Christians should "desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy [meaning to testify of the Savior]" (1 Cor. 14:1).

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught, "All members of the Church should seek for the gift of prophecy, for their own guidance" (*Church History and Modern Revelation*, 2 vols. [1953], 1:201).

Every Church member, if faithful, has the right to receive revelation for his or her personal blessing.

HOW DO WE RECOGNIZE THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT?

One might ask, What are the spiritual manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit? The scriptures are clear with regard to the feelings one has within when touched by the Spirit.

For guidance, perhaps the following words to Oliver Cowdery represent a primary manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit:



The Lord gave Oliver Cowdery instruction regarding translation of the plates.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, blessed art thou for what thou hast done; for thou hast inquired of me, and behold, as often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction of my Spirit. If it had not been so, thou wouldst not have come to the place where thou art at this time.

"Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me and I did enlighten thy mind; and now I tell thee these things that thou mayest know that thou hast been enlightened by the Spirit of truth" (D&C 6:14–15).

It is very important for us to pray and to fast and to be close to our Heavenly Father so when that light is brought to our mind, we will recognize it.

"Yea, I tell thee, that thou mayest know that there is none else save God that knowest thy thoughts and the intents of thy heart.

"I tell thee these things as a witness unto thee—that the words or the work which thou hast been writing are true" (vv. 16–17).

The Lord reminded Oliver of the night he prayed to "know concerning the truth of these things." He helped Oliver remember by saying, "Did I not speak peace to your mind . . . ? What greater witness can you have than from God?" (vv. 22–23). Oliver had to learn to recognize influences of the Spirit, as you and I must learn.

THE GIFT OF TRANSLATION

The gift of translation was something that Oliver took for granted. Consider Oliver Cowdery's desire to translate and the instruction given him by the Lord, as recorded in section 9 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

This scripture describes the process he must follow and then describes how the Lord responds: "Behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right" (D&C 9:8).

It is important that as we read the sections given to Oliver Cowdery (D&C 6 and 9), we understand how they apply to us.

HOW TO RECEIVE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

Access to the gifts of the Holy Ghost is guaranteed only when we live our lives in harmony with the principles of the gospel. There was a period of time following the Savior's earthly ministry when these gifts were not active in the lives of God's children. The loss of these gifts resulted from a turning away from heavenly thoughts or

acts and an acceptance of earthly gods.

Elder Orson Pratt (1811–81) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles discussed John Wesley’s insightful words from the mid-1700s (*Sermon 94*) as he wrote about the Dark Ages:

“The real cause why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to be found in the christian church, was, *because the christians were turned heathens again. . . .* If then, the ‘whole of christendom,’ without one exception, have been ‘buried in the most abominable idolatry for upwards of eight hundred years,’ . . . And if they, because they are destitute of the gifts, are not even now christians, but heathens . . . , we ask where the authority was during this eight hundred years, and where is it now? Surely God would not recognise ‘the most abominable idolaters,’ as holding authority” (*Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon*, no. 2 [1850], 21).

Through the faith and instrumentality of Joseph Smith, the gifts of the Holy Ghost were restored with the restoration of the priesthood.

The sixth and seventh articles of faith state:

“We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth” (A of F 1:6).

“We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth” (A of F 1:7).

Following our baptism, each of us had those holding the Melchizedek Priesthood lay hands on our heads for us to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. If we are faithful, we can have His influence with us. Through Him, we each can be blessed with certain spiritual powers called gifts of the Spirit. These gifts are given to those who are faithful to Christ. They will help us know and teach the truths of the gospel. They will help us bless others. They will guide us back to our Heavenly Father.

While the Holy Ghost can influence all mankind, the gift of the Holy Ghost functions when:

- an individual has been baptized and confirmed by one having the priesthood and has been given the gift of the Spirit,
- an individual continues to act under the principles of righteousness,
- the recipient is striving to be virtuous and pure,
- the recipient acts with integrity and truth and keeps the commandments of God.



Through the faith and instrumentality of Joseph Smith, the gifts of the Holy Ghost were restored with the restoration of the priesthood.

Ponder this message from President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901) as he served as First Counselor in the First Presidency:

“If any of us are imperfect, it is our duty to pray for the gift that will make us perfect. . . . No man ought to say, ‘Oh, I cannot help this; it is my nature.’ He is not justified in it, for the reason that God has promised to give strength to correct these things, and to give gifts that will eradicate them. If a man lack wisdom, it is his duty to ask God for wisdom. The same with everything else. That is the design of God concerning His Church. He wants His Saints to be perfected in the truth. For this purpose He gives these gifts, and bestows them upon those who seek after them, in order that they may be a perfect people upon the face of the earth” (*Millennial Star*, 23 Apr. 1894, 260).

So, as we consider each of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, remember the counsel of heaven is to “seek . . . earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given;

“For verily I say unto you, they are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do; that all may be benefited that seek” (D&C 46:8–9).

A prerequisite for seeking after the gifts may require that we find out which gifts we have been given. The scriptures further record:

“And again, verily I say unto you, I would that ye should always remember, and always retain in your minds what those gifts are, that are given unto the church.

“For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God” (D&C 46:10–11).

To find the gifts we have been given, we must pray and fast. Often patriarchal blessings tell us the gifts we have received and declare the promise of gifts we can receive if we seek after them. I urge you each to discover your gifts and to seek after those that will bring direction to your life’s work and that will further the work of heaven.

During our time here on earth, we have been charged to develop the natural gifts and capabilities Heavenly Father has blessed us with. Then it will be our opportunity to use these gifts to become teachers and leaders of God’s children wherever they may be found on earth. To exercise these gifts, we must develop a purity of heart.

The world needs people who can keep their word,



who have a code of honor, and who can finish a task and endure to the end.

As Latter-day Saints, we need not look like the world. We need not entertain like the world. Our personal habits should be different. Our recreation should be different. Our concern for family will be different. As we establish this distinctiveness firmly in our life's pattern, the blessings of heaven await to assist us.

How can we accomplish this goal? I know there is a loving Heavenly Father who wishes to help. He has made available sacred gifts—even the gifts of the Spirit. As we exercise and magnify these gifts, we will be able to accomplish the callings and responsibilities that will come into our lives.

THE GIFT OF DISCERNMENT

We can have the gift of discerning of spirits. George Q. Cannon has called the gift of discerning of spirits "a gift that is of exceeding value and one that should be enjoyed by every Latter-day Saint. . . . No Latter-day Saint should be without this gift, because there is such a variety of spirits in the world which seek to deceive and lead astray" (*Gospel Truth*, sel. Jerreld L. Newquist, 2 vols. in 1 [1987], 156–57).

Some may mean well but are listening to the wrong influence. Some people operate in a spirit

To find the gifts we have been given, we must pray and fast. Often patriarchal blessings tell us the gifts we have received and declare the promise of gifts we can receive if we seek after them.

of contention—clever with words from much practice, but not focused on correcting their own imperfections. They focus on the imperfections of others.

The Spirit of the Lord withdraws from them with their faultfinding and contentions. Unless they change, they rarely endure to the end but fall away in time. The Lord and the prophets of this day have set the course we should follow.

How can I question without losing the Spirit? This is a question often asked of me by young people. All of us have questions at times in our lives on policies, procedures, or even principles. The best way to find the answers we seek is to search out the solution for ourselves.

How do we go about it?

First and foremost, it is our attitude, or how we ask the question, that is very, very important. If it is a demand, one loses the opportunity for an answer.

Second, if we have strong feelings about the way something should be and are unwilling to listen, we may lose the opportunity to get an answer.

One only has to remember when Martin Harris wanted to take home pages of the Book of Mormon translation to show to others. Joseph Smith prayed to the Lord a number of times to finally be allowed to let the man do it. The Lord knew that the pages would be lost.



But sometimes we want something so much and keep praying about it that the Lord lets us do it for our learning experience.

Sometimes we are drawn into seeking and giving answers that bring recognition or notoriety to “our” thinking and to “our” opinion. Don’t look for signs or answers that build you up. Humility and submissiveness to God will always be fundamental in receiving direction from Him.

Others operate in a spirit of gratitude to the Lord for the gospel and concentrate on correcting their own imperfections. We can develop the ability to discern what spirit is influencing others and ourselves. We should seek and pray for this gift lest we be deceived.

The gift of discernment is like the rod of iron; it will keep us on the path toward the tree of life, which means eternal life.

This gift is of significant value in determining personal direction and in ministering in God’s service. In 1 John 4:1–3 we read:

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

“And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of

We have been charged to develop the natural gifts and capabilities Heavenly Father has blessed us with. Then it will be our opportunity to use these gifts to become teachers and leaders of God’s children.

antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

How does one distinguish between manifestations of the Spirit and counterfeits? One might ask these questions:

Is the manifestation edifying?

Spiritual gifts are not given to satisfy one’s lusts or curiosities, but are given as a blessing and benefit to those who love God and keep His commandments.

In acts of healing, does the healer follow the divinely established procedures? That is, does he do it in the manner in which Jesus did, seeking faith and purity of heart and then anointing with oil?

Has the worker of miracles received the gift of the Holy Ghost himself through the prescribed ordinances? One cannot invoke the blessings of heaven without having received the gifts and the right or authority to act in His name.

CAUTIONS

May I take a moment to talk of some cautions taught me by experiences that I have observed regarding the gifts of the Spirit.

Too often people feel that answers to their prayers and their pleading for guidance and direction will be given in dramatic manifestations or through a direct

voice giving specific directions from a heavenly host. My personal experience and my observation of the Brethren as they guide and direct the Church and solve problems has taught me that the answers come often-times over an extended period of time with almost a natural solution whereby people take actions on the feelings of their hearts—which bring them peace and comfort—rather than through dramatic revelation.

Let me give you an example of how I learned this lesson. As a regional representative, I was traveling with President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988) to a stake conference for the selection of a new stake president. We had been driving in a car for more than an hour discussing the Church and priesthood administration. For some reason, I asked a question that, at the moment I asked it, I realized was inappropriate.

The question I asked President Romney was “What is the most spiritual experience you have had as an Apostle of the Lord?” There was a pause. It seemed like an eternity. Then he said, “I believe what Joseph Smith and Brigham Young taught, that if we would keep our spiritual experiences to ourselves, many more spiritual experiences could be shared with us.”

It seemed like there was a long period of silence after that remark, and then he said to me, “I owe you a better answer.” Then he gave me great counsel. He said the greatest spiritual experiences of his life had been when he had been on assignment from the President of the Church or the President of the Quorum of the Twelve, as we were that day. He said: “We will interview 25 or 30 priesthood brethren, and there will be more than one who will be qualified to be the stake president. But after we have done all we can do, we will get on our knees and pray to our Heavenly Father. We will tell Him of our feelings of who the new stake president ought to be and the reasons why. We will tell Him of the needs of the stake at this time. Then He will give us a confirmation.”

It was interesting that he said “us,” because it was true on that occasion that as we knelt and prayed, we both were able to receive a confirmation.

This is one of the best examples that I have had of what the gifts of the Spirit are and how they are manifest in our life’s work. Apply the principles taught by President Romney to understand that you can have discernment and confirmation of the concerns that confront you, such as choosing a companion or choosing a career that is best for you.

Isn’t it interesting that President Romney was sent to interview 25 or 30 men to choose one stake president rather than being told directly who it should be before his arrival? This is what the Lord means when He tells us to study it out in our own minds. Too often we want to be given answers to questions and problems that, if they were given in the manner we ask for them, would take away our agency and the blessings that come from reaching out to the Lord for answers and direction.

Some think it would be nice to have “spiritual fortune cookies” we could open to find the answers to life’s challenges. Wouldn’t it be nice to have a labeled jar we could reach into for our answers? But that is not the way it is meant to be.

I would like to express my love for my companion. I would not be what I am without her. I love her dearly. She has gifts of the Spirit. We study the scriptures together, and many of the concepts I teach have come because we have had companion study and prayer. That is why I am who I am, and I must acknowledge that.

Many of you young adults are in the process of choosing a companion, and you must go through a long process before you make your decision. You have spent years thinking about what qualities or attributes you would like your companion to have. But at the same time you must be working very hard to make yourself the type of person who will attract the companion you desire.

As you go through your dating and courting relationships, I would hope that you will assess the spiritual inclinations of the individuals you’re getting to know better. How is their testimony? How do they treat their parents? How do they treat their brothers and sisters? Do

they respect authority? Do they love the Lord, His servants, and the scriptures? What plans do they have for their lives?

It isn’t enough if they are handsome or beautiful, if they are rich or poor, what kind of car they drive, what kind of clothes they wear, what kind of athletic ability they have, or what kind of intellect they are. You should be seeking to understand the gifts they have that will be eternal in nature.

USE AND DEVELOP THE GIFTS

We must work together to use and develop gifts of the Spirit. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said:



The Lord knew that the pages Joseph Smith gave to Martin Harris would be lost. But sometimes we want something so much and keep praying about it that the Lord lets us do it for our own learning experience.

“God loves you as He loves each and every one of His children, and His desire and purpose and glory is to have you return to Him pure and undefiled, having proven yourselves worthy of an eternity of joy in His presence” (“A Message to the Rising Generation,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 30).

Satan is mindful of each of us. He is committed to our destruction. He hopes we will fail to keep the covenants we have made to our Heavenly Father at baptism and in the temple. That is the only joy and satisfaction he and his disciples will ever have—when one of us falls. Think about it.

Lehi records that an angel of God had fallen from heaven, and he became a devil, having sought that which was evil before God.

“And because he had fallen from heaven, and had become miserable forever, he sought also the misery of all mankind” (2 Ne. 2:18).

“Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Ne. 2:27).

THE GIFT OF CHARITY

There is one gift I would like to focus on—the gift of charity. Use charity, “the pure love of Christ” (Moro. 7:47), and give service for the right reasons. Charity is the ability to make life more meaningful for others. It is the theme of the Relief Society for a reason.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

“Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil” (1 Cor. 13:1–5).

If we have these gifts and do not give of them to

lift and to strengthen those around us in a caring way, this scripture tells us that “it profiteth [us] nothing.” My wife has taught us in our home a simple phrase: “Thee lift me and I’ll lift thee, and we’ll ascend together.” There are times when we need to be lifted. There are times when we need to be strengthened. Be that kind of friend and that kind of person who lifts and strengthens others. Never make someone have to choose between your ways and the Lord’s ways. And always make sure that you’re making it easier to live God’s commandments for those who are by your side and who are your friends. Then you will understand whether you have charity.

Remember that the reason we want to have the stability and strength of the gifts of the Spirit is that

we want to weather the storms when they come. We will be tried in this mortal probation. We don’t want to decide to learn how to swim when the boat is already sinking. When a severe disability or problem comes to a family or an individual, a high percentage of families and individuals break up, disintegrate, because they are overwhelmed and unprepared. That is why we are faithful, and that is why we remain strong and have those spiritual gifts.

Through His knowledge and obedience, when Jesus was in pain and upon the cross, He thought about taking care of His mother and spoke to John the Beloved about it (see John 19:25–27). In all of the pain we must go through, we have to remember the pain that is in others.

The gifts of the Spirit can guide and enrich our lives. They can strengthen us spiritually and temporally. They can help us bless the lives of others. Most important, they can bring us comfort in times of trial. They can help us magnify our callings. They can help guide us in our relationships. They can help us avoid being deceived.

I bear testimony that God has given us the gifts of the Spirit to allow us to be drawn more closely into His circle of love. He desires that we should receive these gifts of the Spirit and magnify them and have them grow within us. We have to teach one another how to seek after them. As we do, our faith in Him will increase and our true destiny will be fulfilled, ultimately to return to His presence as His valiant sons and daughters. May we seek after and obtain these gifts, I humbly pray. □

Gospel topics: gifts of the Spirit, Holy Ghost, discernment, charity



God has given us the gifts of the Spirit to allow us to be drawn more closely into His circle of love.



FAMILY HOME EVENINGS THAT WORK

Love As Jesus Loved

Members' experiences show that there are a variety of successful approaches to family night.

Do you ever feel stuck in a rut in your efforts to hold family home evening? Maybe all you need are some fresh ideas and perspectives. Family home evening can be approached in a variety of ways. Some approaches involve formal planning, while others make the most of informal teaching moments. By relying on the Spirit of the Lord for inspiration and guidance, you can find the approaches that work best for your family. Following are some possibilities and experiences shared by Ensign readers.

SHARING OUR PRAYER EXPERIENCES

As we have held family home evenings, there have been times when I wondered if anything meaningful was happening. But I came to realize that if we put forth our best efforts, the Lord blessed us.

For one of our family home evenings, my husband, Karl, and I felt strongly that we should talk with our children about prayer. We told them of times when Heavenly Father had answered our prayers. Karl then asked each of the children to share a prayer experience of their own.

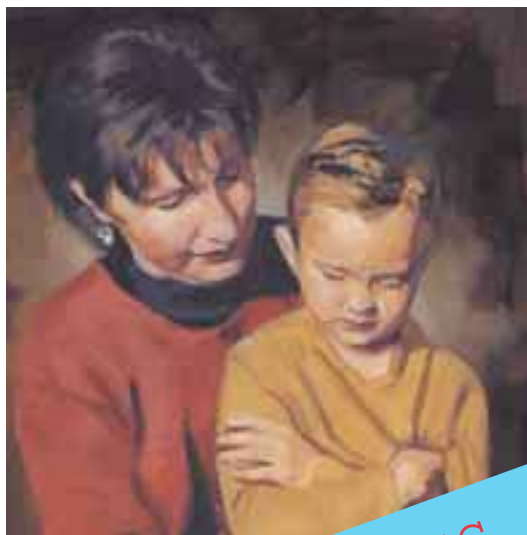
Their responses touched our hearts, for we did not realize that our children

had had so many wonderful experiences with prayer.

Richard told about the operation he had had on his foot and how his prayers to be healed had been answered. Nathan remembered having the pain from an ear infection taken away. Laralynn told about the time her dad and her uncle had given her a priesthood blessing when she was sick and she had gotten better. Robert and Amy shared stories. Then we talked about how we had been praying that little Jeffrey would be able to go to his nursery class and not cry, and now he was doing so much better.

These and other experiences that were shared reminded me that the Lord is truly willing to "bless our efforts day by day" ("God, Our Father, Hear Us Pray,"

Hymns, no. 170).—Diane Stokes Stock, Copperhill 10th Ward, Salt Lake Hunter Copperhill Stake



REINFORCING LESSONS DURING THE WEEK

We have found a way to supplement and reinforce our family home evening lesson throughout the week. We create a bulletin board display using pictures and word strips that focus on the key message of the lesson.

The board hangs beside the kitchen table so that we can refer to

HELP WITHOUT BEING ASKED



it often during the week. At bedtime we read stories from Church magazines that support and amplify our family night lesson for that week. We keep a file of visuals and stories organized by gospel topics that can be easily accessed for our nighttime reading.

In this way we hope to make our family home evening lessons more effective and help our family gain a greater understanding of the gospel.—**Lisa Turner Whitsitt, Whitby Ward, Oshawa Ontario Stake**

FIRESIDE CHATS AND FAMILY SUPPORT

One of our most successful family home evening ideas was simply to gather around a small campfire. There is something about the glowing coals of a campfire that helps children share their feelings. Once we got the fire going, we roasted hot dogs and marshmallows and chatted. We learned many things about our children they had never told us before. We found that the same cozy, comfortable feeling could be created indoors around a fireplace with the household lights turned off.

Another successful family night activity involved

the whole family helping with one of the children's projects, such as a merit badge or a Young Women achievement goal. One night our family attended a city council meeting because a son was working on his Citizenship in the Community merit badge. It was a great opportunity for all of us to learn more about our city and how government works.—**Betty Jan Murphy, Pine Ward, Payson Arizona Stake**

"THAT IS JOSEPH SMITH"

One night our two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Carrie, announced it was family home evening. So I asked her who would do the lesson. She said it was her turn and grabbed a copy of the *Ensign*. She sat down on the floor, and her dad and I sat behind her on the couch.

She pointed to the front cover and explained that it was Joseph Smith. She then proceeded to thumb through the entire magazine, pointing out images of Jesus, Joseph Smith, President Gordon B. Hinckley, and Brigham Young. Then, with a gasp, she paused when she got to the inside back cover, which was a painting of the Prophet in Liberty Jail.

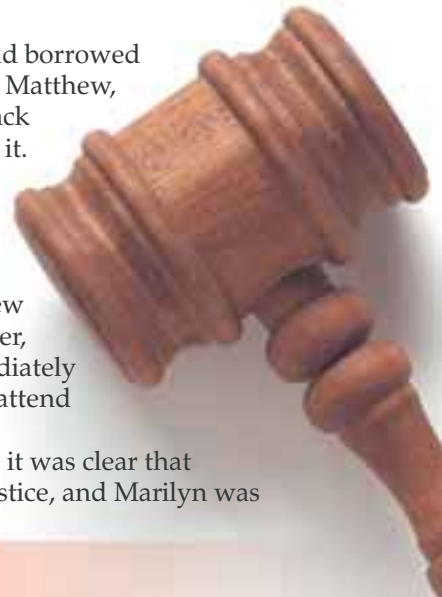
"Oh, Mommy and Daddy," she said, "that is Joseph Smith, and he is very sad. But he is on his knees. He is having prayer to Heavenly Father. You know what? Heavenly Father will bless him, and then he will be all happy again."

It was not a planned family night, but it really opened my eyes to the depth of understanding that a little child can have. Carrie's expression of faith that the Prophet would be blessed and "all happy again" gave my own faith a boost.—**Robann S. Reichenbach, South Bend Ward, South Bend Indiana Stake**

"FAMILY COURT"

Our daughter Marilyn had borrowed five dollars from her brother Matthew, with the promise to pay it back quickly, and now he wanted it. They had reached an impasse, and feelings were beginning to run hot. Marilyn was willing to pay her debt but couldn't for a few more days. Matthew, however, demanded his money immediately for an activity he wanted to attend that same day.

As I viewed the situation, it was clear that Matthew was demanding justice, and Marilyn was



asking for mercy—but it appeared that both could not have their way.

In past family home evening lessons, I had used the story called “The Mediator” told by President Boyd K. Packer, now Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (see *Ensign*, May 1977, 54–55). Now I felt impressed to apply that story’s concepts to our family’s situation in order to bring the principle of the Atonement to life in our minds and hearts.

I called our family together and explained that we were going to hold a “family court.” Matthew and Marilyn each took a turn presenting their cases to the rest of us. When they finished, we opened up the time for questions from the other family members.

I asked Matthew if it mattered who paid him back the money. After all, as long as he received the five dollars, his demand would be met and justice would be served. He answered that it didn’t matter, as long as he had the money in his hands right away.

I then turned to Marilyn and asked, if someone paid the debt for her now, would she be willing to owe the money to someone else and try to repay that person as soon as she could? In this way, mercy would be extended in her behalf. She accepted readily.

I then pulled five dollars out of my wallet and gave it to Matthew.

I explained to the children that this was an illustration of what the Lord had done for us. Because of His infinite love for us, He paid the price for our sins, and He extended to us a plan of redemption from sin that was within our ability to grasp and accomplish. He satisfied the demands of justice and offered mercy to us.

I am grateful for the opportunity this situation gave our family to discuss and more fully appreciate the Savior’s great sacrificial offering.—**Douglas C. Dickey, Holland Ward, Grand Rapids Michigan Stake**





"LOOK AT THE RAINBOW!"

One of our most memorable family home evening experiences came about in a completely unexpected way. Our six-year-old son, Eric, was in charge of the lesson, but he was having trouble deciding what to do. All of us made suggestions, but he said no to everything, mostly because he didn't want to have a lesson at all!

We were gathered in the living room, waiting for him to decide—and wondering if we should skip the whole thing—when suddenly Eric looked up and ran to the window. "Look at the rainbow!" he said.

It had been raining earlier, but now the sun was coming out. It provided a breathtakingly beautiful rainbow that was practically in our front yard. We oohed and aahed for a while, and then Eric said, "Let's draw rainbows."

We set out crayons, markers, and paper, and while we worked on our drawings we talked about what the Lord said the rainbow stood for after the Flood. As the kids finished up their pictures, I read the story of Noah.

The rainbow outside our window faded, but our children learned that God's promises are sure and will never fade.—**Molly Larson, American Fork 31st Ward, American Fork Utah North Stake**

LEARNING TO GIVE TALKS

Before I was eight, my parents decided to devote a family home evening to helping us learn how to give a talk. They explained a basic approach to giving a short talk: state the gospel principle, provide two or

A PROTECTION AGAINST THE EVILS OF OUR TIME



"In all the family units throughout the Church, evaluate again the progress you are making in holding regular family home evenings. The application of this program will be a shield and a protection to you against the evils of our time and will bring you, individually and collectively, greater and abundant joy now and in the eternities hereafter."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Therefore I Was Taught," Ensign, May 1994, 38.



three supporting examples from the scriptures or from your life, bear testimony of the gospel principle, and close. The best part of the evening came when we each got a chance to practice. All five children were given subjects and were helped through the steps of preparing and giving a talk. We loved the chance to show off for Mom and Dad!

Not long after our family night lesson, I was assigned to give a talk in Primary. Unfortunately I forgot about it, so I was not prepared when our Primary meeting was about to start and I realized I was supposed to speak. I told the Primary president I would give a talk anyway. She seemed doubtful (after all, I wasn't even eight yet). Remembering

what I had learned during family home evening, I quickly prepared a talk while the opening songs and other matters were going on. Then, when the time came, I was able to give a short talk. The Primary leaders seemed impressed, and I felt good all that day.

I am grateful that I learned some basic skills during family home evening that helped me in this situation. My early experiences in public speaking gave me confidence that has carried over into my adulthood.—**Paige Ladd, Ahwatukee Second Ward, Tempe Arizona West Stake**

WE HEARD IT AMONG THE GRAPEVINES

Some of our best family teaching has occurred at unplanned moments when we have done little more than make sure we were together. For example, working as a family on a fairly mindless and boring



task can be the setting for valuable, constructive interaction.

One time when the grapes in our yard needed pruning, I found a sale on hand pruners and bought some for the four members of our family. On Monday night, out we marched. After a few basic instructions we all began in earnest. Soon our youngest son was telling us about a conversation he had had with a new boy in school. The boy said that at his former school the basketball coach had told him to swear during games because it was intimidating to the other team. The family discussion that followed was one we could not have planned any better, and it gave us the opportunity to review and reinforce gospel standards.

—Thaylene Barrett, Pleasant View First Ward, Provo Utah

Sharon East Stake □

Gospel topics: family home evening, parenthood

More on this topic: "Family Home Evening—Any Size, Any Situation," Ensign, Dec. 2001, 40–43; G. G. Vandagriff, "Need a Family Discussion? Try a Church Magazine," Ensign, July 2001, 60–61; L. Tom Perry, "Therefore I Was Taught," Ensign, May 1994, 38.

Visit www.lds.org or see Church magazines on CD.



THE ORIGIN of Man

“God created man in his own image” (Genesis 1:27).

In the early 1900s, questions concerning the Creation of the earth and the theories of evolution became the subject of much public discussion. In the midst of these controversies, the First Presidency issued the following in 1909, which expresses the Church’s doctrinal position on these matters. A reprinting of this important First Presidency statement will be helpful as members of the Church study the Old Testament this year.

BY THE FIRST PRESIDENCY OF THE CHURCH



Inquiries arise from time to time respecting the attitude of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints upon questions

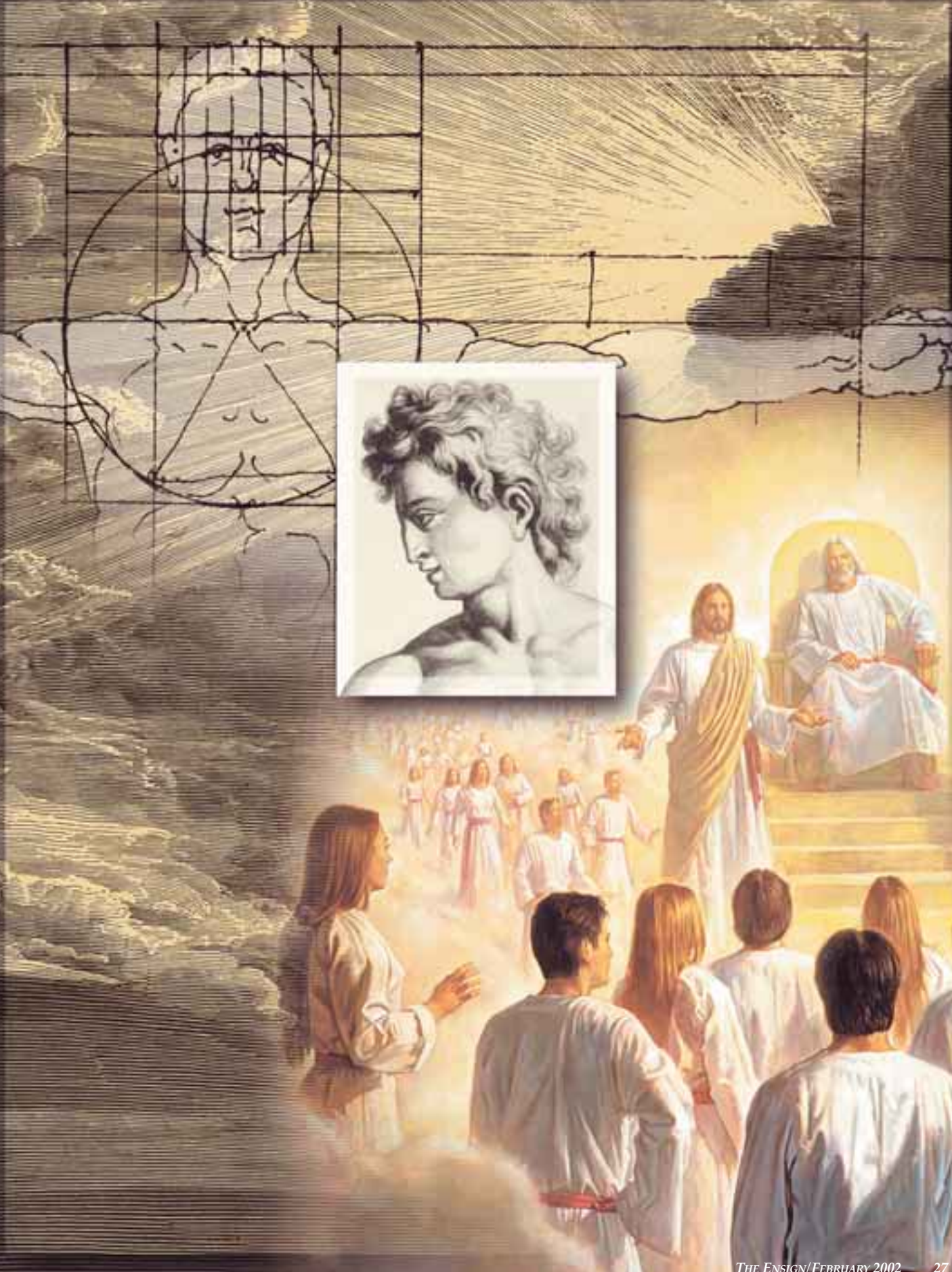
which, though not vital from a doctrinal standpoint, are closely connected with the fundamental principles of salvation. The latest inquiry of this kind that has reached us is in relation to the origin of man. It is believed that a statement of the position held by the Church upon this subject will be timely and productive of good.

In presenting the statement that follows we are not conscious of putting forth anything essentially new; neither is it our desire so to do. Truth is what we wish to present, and truth—eternal truth—is fundamentally old. A restatement of the original attitude

of the Church relative to this matter is all that will be attempted here. To tell the truth as God has revealed it, and commend it to the acceptance of those who need to conform their opinions thereto, is the sole purpose of this presentation.

“God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” In these plain and pointed words the inspired author of the book of Genesis made known to the world the truth concerning the origin of the human family. Moses, the prophet-historian—“learned,” as we are told, “in all the wisdom of the Egyptians”—when making this important announcement was not voicing a mere opinion, a theory derived from his researches into the occult lore of that ancient people. He was speaking as the mouthpiece of God, and his solemn declaration was for all time and for all people. No subsequent revelator of the truth has contradicted the great leader and lawgiver of Israel. All who have since spoken by divine authority upon this theme have confirmed his simple and sublime proclamation. Nor could it be otherwise. Truth has but one source, and all revelations from heaven are harmonious with each other. The omnipotent Creator, the maker of heaven and earth, had shown

The creation was twofold—first spiritual, secondly temporal. This truth Moses plainly taught in that more complete account of the Creation, found in the book of Moses.



unto Moses everything pertaining to this planet, including the facts relating to man's origin, and the authoritative pronouncement of that mighty prophet and seer to the house of Israel, and through Israel to the whole world, is couched in the simple clause: "God created man in his own image" (Gen. 1:27; see Moses 1:27–41).

The creation was twofold—first spiritual, secondly temporal. This truth, also, Moses plainly taught—much more plainly than it has come down to us in the imperfect translations of the Bible that are now in use. Therein the fact of a spiritual creation, antedating the temporal creation, is strongly implied, but the proof of it is not so clear and conclusive as in other records held by the Latter-day Saints to be of equal authority with the Jewish scriptures. The partial obscurity of the latter upon the point in question is owing, no doubt, to the loss of those "plain and precious" parts of sacred writ, which, as the Book of Mormon informs us, have been taken away from the Bible during its passage down the centuries (see 1 Ne. 13:24–29). Some of these missing parts the Prophet Joseph Smith undertook to restore when he revised those scriptures by the spirit of revelation, the result being that more complete account of the Creation which is found in the book of Moses, previously cited. Note the following passages:

"And now, behold, I say unto you, that these are the generations of the heaven and of the earth, when they were created, in the day that I, the Lord God, made the heaven and the earth,

"And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. For I, the Lord God, created all things of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth. For I, the Lord God, had not caused it to rain upon the face of the earth. And I, the Lord God, had created all the children of men; and not yet a man to till the ground; for in heaven created I them, and there was not yet flesh upon the earth, neither in the water, neither in the air;

"But, I, the Lord God, spake, and there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

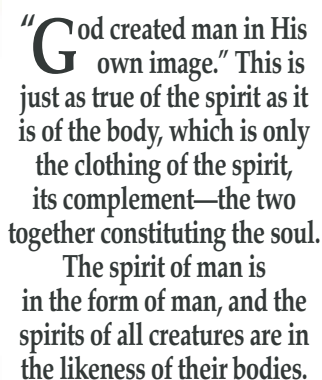
"And I, the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul, the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also; nevertheless, all things were before created; but spiritually were they created and made according to my word" (Moses 3:4–7; see also chapters 1 and 2, and compare with Gen. 1 and 2).

These two points being established, namely, the creation of man in the image of God, and

the twofold character of the Creation, let us now inquire: What was the form of man, in the spirit and in the body, as originally created? In a general way the answer is given in the words chosen as the text of this treatise. "God created man in his own image." It is more explicitly rendered in the Book of Mormon thus: "All men were created in the beginning after mine own image" (Ether 3:15). . . . If, therefore, we can ascertain the form of the "Father of spirits," "The God of the spirits of all flesh," we shall be able to discover the form of the original man.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is "the express image" of His

Father's person (Heb. 1:3). He walked the earth as a human being, as a perfect man, and said, in answer to a question put to Him: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). This alone ought to solve the problem to the satisfaction of every thoughtful, reverent mind. The conclusion is irresistible, that if the Son of God be the express image (that is, likeness) of His Father's person, then His Father is in the form of a man; for that was the form of the Son of God, not only during His mortal life, but before His mortal birth, and after His Resurrection. It was in this form that the Father and the Son, as two personages, appeared to Joseph Smith, when, as a boy of 14 years, he received his first vision. Then if God made man—the first man—in His own image and likeness, He must have made him like unto Christ, and consequently like unto men of Christ's time and of the present day. That man was made in the image of Christ is positively stated in the book of Moses: "And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and it was so. . . .



"God created man in His own image." This is just as true of the spirit as it is of the body, which is only the clothing of the spirit, its complement—the two together constituting the soul. The spirit of man is in the form of man, and the spirits of all creatures are in the likeness of their bodies.

“And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them” (Moses 2:26–27).

The Father of Jesus is our Father also. Jesus Himself taught this truth when He instructed His disciples how to pray: “Our Father which art in heaven,” etc. Jesus, however, is the firstborn among all the sons of God—the first begotten in the spirit, and the only begotten in the flesh. He is our elder brother, and we, like Him, are in the image of God. All men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity.

“God created man in His own image.” This is just as true of the spirit as it is of the body, which is only the clothing of the spirit, its complement—the two together constituting the soul. The spirit of man is in the form of man, and the spirits of all creatures are in the likeness of their bodies. This was plainly taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 77:2).

Here is further evidence of the fact. More than 700 years before Moses was shown the things pertaining to this earth, another great prophet, known to us as the brother of Jared, was similarly favored by the Lord. He was even permitted to behold the spirit-body of the foreordained Savior, prior to His incarnation; and so like the body of a man was gazing upon a being of flesh and blood. He first saw the finger and then the entire body of the Lord—all in the spirit. The Book of Mormon says of this wonderful manifestation:

“And it came to pass that when the brother of Jared had said these words, behold, the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his finger. And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood; and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear.

“And the Lord saw that the brother of Jared had fallen to the earth; and the Lord said to him: Arise, why hast thou fallen?

“And he saith unto the Lord: I saw the finger of the Lord, and I feared lest he should smite me; for I knew not that the Lord had flesh and blood.

“And the Lord said unto him: Because of thy faith thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood; and never has man come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast; for were it not so ye could not have seen my finger. Sawest thou more than this?

“And he answered: Nay; Lord, show thyself unto me.

“And the Lord said unto him: Believest thou the words which I shall speak?

“And he answered, Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie.

“And when he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you.

“Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall

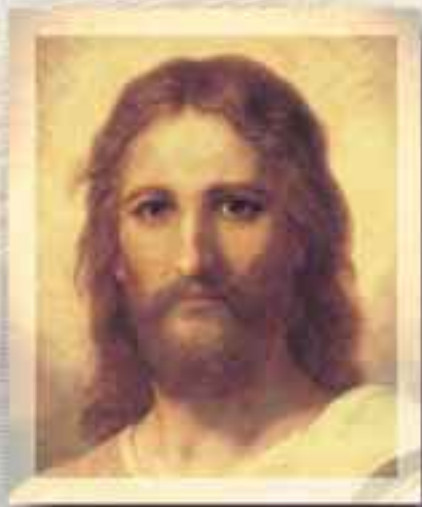
believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters.

“And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast. Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image.

“Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh” (Ether 3:6–16).

What more is needed to convince us that man, both in spirit and in body, is the image and likeness of God and that God Himself is in the form of a man?

When the divine Being whose spirit-body the brother of Jared beheld took upon Him flesh and blood, He appeared as a man, having “body, parts and passions,” like other men, though vastly superior to all others, because He was God, even the Son of God, the Word made flesh: in Him “dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” And why should He not appear as a



man? That was the form of His spirit, and it must needs have an appropriate covering, a suitable tabernacle. He came into the world as He had promised to come (see 3 Ne. 1:13), taking an infant tabernacle and developing it gradually to the fulness of His spirit stature. He came as man had been coming for ages and as man has continued to come ever since. Jesus, however, as shown, was the Only Begotten of God in the flesh.

Adam, our first progenitor, “the first man,” was, like Christ, a preexistent spirit, and like Christ he took upon him an appropriate body, the body of a man, and so became a “living soul.” The doctrine of the preexistence—revealed so plainly, particularly in latter days—pours a wonderful flood of light upon the otherwise mysterious problem of man’s origin. It shows that man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal body to undergo an experience in mortality. It teaches that all men existed in the spirit before any man existed in the flesh and that all who have inhabited the earth since Adam have taken bodies and become souls in like manner.

It is held by some that Adam was not the first man upon this earth and that the original human being was a development from lower orders of the animal creation. These, however, are the theories of men. The word of the Lord declared that Adam was “the first man of all men” (Moses 1:34), and we are therefore in duty bound to regard him as the primal parent of our race. It was shown to the brother of Jared that all men were created in the *beginning* after the image of God; whether we take this to mean the spirit or the body, or both, it commits us to the same conclusion: Man began life as a human being, in the likeness of our Heavenly Father.

True it is that the body of man enters upon its career as a tiny germ embryo, which becomes an infant, quickened at a certain stage by the spirit whose tabernacle it is, and the child, after being born, develops into a man. There is nothing in this, however, to indicate that the original man, the first of our race, began life as anything less than a man, or less than the human germ or embryo that becomes a man.

Man, by searching, cannot find out God. Never, unaided, will he discover the truth about the beginning of human life. The Lord must reveal Himself or remain unrevealed; and the same is true of the facts relating to the origin of Adam’s race—God alone can reveal them. Some of these facts, however, are already known, and what has been made known it is our duty to receive and retain.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, basing its belief on divine revelation, ancient and modern, proclaims man to be the direct and lineal offspring of Deity. God Himself is an exalted man, perfected, enthroned, and supreme. By His almighty power He organized the earth and all that it contains, from spirit and element, which exist coeternally with Himself. He formed every plant that grows and every animal that breathes, each after its own kind, spiritually and temporally—“that which is spiritual being in the likeness of that which is temporal, and that which is temporal in the likeness of that which is spiritual.” He made the tadpole and the ape, the lion and the elephant, but He did not make them in His own image, nor

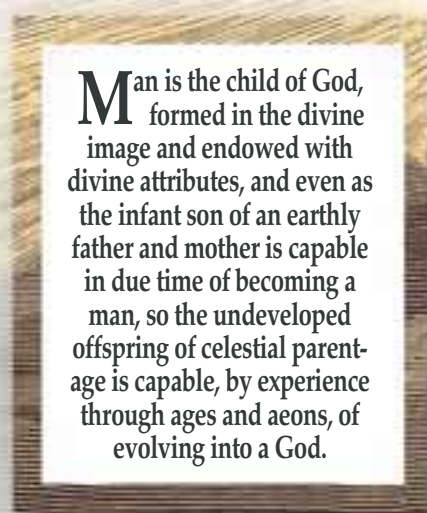
endow them with godlike reason and intelligence. Nevertheless, the whole animal creation will be perfected and perpetuated in the Hereafter, each class in its “distinct order or sphere,” and will enjoy “eternal felicity.” That fact has been made plain in this dispensation (see D&C 77:3).

Man is the child of God, formed in the divine image and endowed with divine attributes, and even as the infant son of an earthly father and mother is capable in due time of becoming a man, so the undeveloped offspring of celestial parentage is capable, by experience through ages and aeons, of evolving into a God. □

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JOHN R. WINDER
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FIRST PRESIDENCY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
NOVEMBER 1909

*From Improvement Era, Nov. 1909, 75–81; capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling standardized.
Gospel topics: Creation, origin of man*





P

MOSES AND THE

Passover

The Lord gave the children of Israel an enduring symbol that pointed them to salvation through Jesus Christ.

BY RANDALL C. BIRD

After nearly 3,500 years, Moses is regarded by people of many different faiths throughout the world as one of the Lord's greatest prophets. In fact, one of the duties of every latter-day President of the Church is "to be like unto Moses" (D&C 107:91), the deliverer, great lawgiver, and prophet of ancient Israel. Further, the life and teachings of Moses have been used by ancient and modern prophets to exhort followers of God (for example, see Isa. 63:7–14; John 6:31–35; 1 Ne. 17:23–42; D&C 84:23–25). His story may be divided into three equal parts of 40 years each: his royal upbringing in Egypt, his pastoral life



"And [when] the daughter of Pharaoh . . . saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it" (Ex. 2:5).

in Midian, and his prophetic leadership of Israel (see Acts 7:22–23, 29–30, 36).

MOSES' EARLY YEARS

He was born the son of Levite parents but raised by the daughter of the king of Egypt (Pharaoh), who found him floating in a basket upon the Nile River, placed there by his mother, who feared Pharaoh's decree that all male Israelite babies be killed (see Ex. 2:1–10). Moses became a prince but later chose to reject the religious beliefs and practices of the Egyptians, preferring to suffer persecution for his hope in the Messiah (see Heb. 11:24–26). Aware of how cruelly the Egyptians

treated his people, he attempted one day to stop the beating of an Israelite slave and in the process killed the Egyptian (see Ex. 2:11–12). Moses fled Egypt to Midian, across the Gulf of Aqaba from the Sinai peninsula, where in time he married and labored as a shepherd under the guiding hand of Jethro, his father-in-law and a righteous bearer of the Melchizedek Priesthood (see Ex. 2:15–22; D&C 84:6).

When Moses was about 80 years old, he was tending sheep near Mount Horeb (Sinai) and saw a bush that appeared to burn but was not consumed (see Ex. 3:1–2). Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament, who is Jesus Christ, spoke to Moses from the bush and called him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt (see Ex. 3:4–10). Moses raised several concerns (see Ex. 3:11, 13; 4:1, 10, 13), but Jehovah resolved each one and called Aaron, Moses' older brother, to help him deliver the message, "Let my people go" (Ex. 5:1). Jehovah again later appeared to Moses, and Satan also appeared to Moses (see Moses 1:17), further preparing Moses for his mission in Egypt by expanding his understanding of himself, God, His creations, the history of this world, and Satan's designs (see Moses 1–8).



MOSES LEADS THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

Arriving in Egypt, Moses and Aaron first met with the Israelite elders. After seeing great signs, the Israelites chose to accept Moses' divine call. Moses and Aaron then came before Pharaoh and pled, "Let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord" (Ex. 5:3). But Pharaoh hardened his heart and oppressed the Israelites even more (see Ex. 5:4–19).

Moses and Aaron then performed miracles through the power of the priesthood of God, hoping

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God. . . . And the presence of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush" (JST, Ex. 3:1–2).

to persuade Pharaoh. The waters of the land were turned to blood (see Ex. 7:20–21). Frogs, lice, and flies plagued the people (see Ex. 8:6, 17, 24). The Lord also sent a contagious disease upon all Egyptian cattle, and they died (see Ex. 9:6). Boils with swelling, burning sores burst out upon all Egyptians (Ex. 9:10), and a great hailstorm destroyed the crops of the Egyptians and those laboring in their fields (see Ex. 9:25–26), yet Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go. The Lord sent locusts (see Ex. 10:14–15) and three days of darkness (see Ex. 10:22), but Pharaoh still hardened his heart.

The Lord then decreed that “the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die” (Ex. 11:5). However, Jehovah provided a way that the firstborn children of the Israelites could be saved by slaying a lamb without blemish, a male of the first year (see Ex. 12:5), and by putting its blood on the sides and top of the door frame at the entrance to their homes (see Ex. 12:7). The Lord promised that the destroying angel would pass over the homes wherever the sign of the blood was found. The Lord also said that in killing this lamb, its bones were not to be broken (see Ex. 12:46).

These instructions foreshadowed the death of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who was the Firstborn of the Father (see D&C 93:21). The blood of this lamb was a symbol for the blood of Christ, which was shed as a ransom for sin. And as Jesus hung on the cross, the soldiers declined to break His legs (see John 19:36).

THE PASSOVER MEAL

The Lord’s instructions for eating the firstborn lamb can also be pondered as symbols of how salvation may be obtained through Jesus Christ. First, the Israelites were to roast the lamb with fire (see Ex. 12:8), possibly pointing to the purifying influence of redemption through Christ. They were to eat with their loins girded, shoes on their feet, staff in their

hand, and “eat it in haste” (Ex. 12:11). This represented the quickness with which the Israelites needed to leave Egypt. “No uncircumcised person” was to eat of it (Ex. 12:48). Further, the lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (see Ex. 12:8, 15). Unleavened bread contains no yeast and can therefore be baked without waiting for it to rise. It may also convey the idea that they were to be free of corruption, for leaven or yeast was used as a symbol of corruption (see Bible Dictionary, “Leaven,” 723). Jesus used this same imagery to warn His disciples of “the leaven of the Pharisees” (Matt. 16:6), meaning their corrupt doctrine. Unleavened bread may also be symbolic of Christ, who is the Bread of Life, in whom there is no impurity (see John 6:35).

The bitter herbs reminded them of the harshness of the Israelite slavery in Egypt and may also be symbolic of the bitterness of the bondage of sin.

REMEMBERING THE EXODUS

Inasmuch as the Lord saved the firstborn of the faithful ancient Israelites from death, He rightly claimed them as His (see Ex. 13:2). He commanded that their firstborn sons be dedicated to Him and that their firstborn male animals be sacrificed to Him (see Ex. 13:12). We are similarly indebted to Jesus Christ. He is justified in requesting that we serve Him, for we “are bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6:20). The Passover instituted through Moses for the ancient Israelites is an enduring symbol that teaches us what Jesus Christ

has done to bring salvation to all mankind. □

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Gospel topics: Moses, Passover, Jesus Christ, Old Testament

More on this topic: See Jeffrey R. Holland, “This Do in Remembrance of Me,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 67–69; John P. Pratt, “Passover: Was It Symbolic of His Coming?” *Ensign*, Jan. 1994, 38–45; Terry W. Treseder, “Passover Promises Fulfilled in the Last Supper,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1990, 18–23.



“And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent” (Ex. 7:10).



A

THE LORD IS

Among Us!

The story of how Jehovah led the children of Israel during their journey to Mount Sinai strengthens our faith in the importance of following living prophets.



BY ELDER DAVID W. FERREL
Area Authority Seventy

Our Primary children sing “Follow the Prophet”¹ with enthusiasm and energy, to the delight of all within the sound of their sweet and trusting voices. We follow the prophet, they sing, because “he knows the way.” Like our prophet today, Moses “knew the way” because the Lord gave him instructions.

After the waters of the Red Sea returned to normal, Moses and the children of Israel found themselves at the edge of a desert with sparse means of sustenance. The route for their journey from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai was not to be the more obvious one (see Ex. 13:17–18). Their route was to be the one the Lord wanted them to take (see Ex. 14:2; 15:22, 27; 16:1; 17:1; 19:1–2). A review of the events that took place during their travels provides valuable insights into how the Lord shows that He is among us today.

JEHOVAH PROVIDES WATER AND FOOD

In a desert, water is the most valuable commodity. Imagine the people’s distress when, after journeying three days in a desert, they finally found water at Marah, but it was bitter. They grumbled to Moses, “What shall we drink?” (see Ex. 15:22–24). Jehovah then showed Moses a specific tree, which Moses threw into the pool of water, and the water was “made sweet” (Ex. 15:25). One Jewish source suggests that Moses “wrote upon [the tree] the great and glorious Name [of Jehovah]” before throwing it into the water.²

Another necessity in a desert is food, especially when traveling with a whole nation!³ In the wilderness of Sin, the Israelites complained, “Ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger” (Ex. 16:3). Jehovah responded by telling Moses that He would send quail and manna. Jehovah also gave Moses several strict rules for the people on how to gather and store the



Aaron and Hur rushed forward to support Moses' arms so that they might remain raised until the battle was won.

manna (see Ex. 16:13, 16, 19, 23). These commandments taught them important eternal truths:

1. They were to collect only one omer (about five pints) per person per day. Some gathered more, while others gathered less, but when they came to prepare and eat the manna, everyone had the same amount to eat (see Ex. 16:17–18). Jehovah knew what they needed, and He provided it for them.

2. If an Israelite tried to hoard extra manna, “it bred worms, and stank” (Ex. 16:20). They needed to trust that Jehovah would provide.

3. The double portion of manna to be gathered the day before the Sabbath did not spoil. Thus, the manna was preserved in a way that enabled them to keep the Sabbath day holy (see Ex. 16:22–26).

4. Jehovah commanded Moses, “Fill an omer of [manna] to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness” (Ex. 16:32). This pot of manna became a continual symbol of what Jehovah had done for His people.

At Rephidim, near Sinai, again there was no water. The significance of the mighty miracles of deliverance from Egypt had faded in the minds of the people, and they lamented, “Is the Lord among us, or not?” (Ex. 17:7). They angrily confronted Moses: “Thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst” (Ex. 17:3). Moses explained that their complaints against him were in reality an attack on Jehovah (see Ex. 16:7–8; 17:2, 7). The people were prideful and slow to understand who Jehovah was. So the Lord instructed Moses to walk on ahead of the people from Rephidim to Mount Sinai and stand near “the rock of Horeb” (Ex. 17:6). There the Lord told Moses to perform another wondrous miracle. The people gathered, and the Lord appeared in a cloud before them upon the rock. As instructed, Moses struck the rock with his rod, and water came gushing out, enough water to quench the thirst of a nation while they camped there for about a year (see Isa. 48:21; 1 Ne. 17:29). In doing so, Jehovah dramatically showed that He is the Rock of Israel, the ultimate source of living water (see Topical Guide, “Jesus Christ, Rock”), and that Moses was His prophet.

JEHOVAH, MOSES, AND THE AMALEKITES

The Amalekites soon came to battle against them (see Ex. 17:8–16), and the Israelites received further proof of Moses' crucial role in their lives. Bloodshed began with an attack by the Amalekites against those who were “feeble” and had fallen behind the main camp (see Deut. 25:17–18). This must have alarmed the people and resulted in another plea for divine help. Moses instructed Joshua to gather an army to fight the Amalekites. Then Moses stood atop a hill overlooking

the battle with the rod of God in his hand (see Ex. 17:9). He raised his hands toward heaven, perhaps in prayerful supplication. As the Israelites began to prevail, Moses' arms grew tired and he lowered them. The Amalekites then began to win! (see Ex. 17:11). Noticing this trend, Moses' brother, Aaron, and Hur, who may have been Moses' brother-in-law, rushed forward to support Moses' hands so that they might remain raised until sunset and the winning of the battle.

Seeing Aaron and Hur upholding Moses' arms must have been particularly instructive for the Israelites who had been ready to stone Moses not long before (see Ex. 17:3–4). The Lord showed the children of Israel that He was among them primarily by revealing His power and His words through His servant Moses. The Lord is doing much the same today. The words of His prophets truly demonstrate that the Lord is among us.

FOLLOW THE PROPHET

Camped at the foot of Mount Sinai, Moses received a visit from his family, including his father-in-law, Jethro. It was a joyous reunion (see Ex. 18:5–7). As they visited, Moses rehearsed for him all that the Lord had done for the people. The next day, Jethro watched Moses as he listened to the individual problems of his people and taught them God's laws. Then Jethro offered this counsel to Moses, "Be thou for the people to God-ward" (Ex. 18:19), or as footnote 19a says, "You represent the people before God." Jethro then added, "And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do" (Ex. 18:20).

A prophet is to receive instructions from God and then impart them to us for our safety, success, and happiness. These instructions often take us on routes that are arduous and less popular or traveled. During our travels we may be tempted in our minds and hearts to complain about or stray from the prophet's instructions. When we are "sore afraid," as were the children of Israel (see Ex. 14:10), the temptations of peer pressure, loss of position, power, wealth, or loss of friends and fame can influence us to desire to stay in the world, to stay in our own modern "Egypt" rather than come out of it and become His people. It is not easy nor is the destination immediately obvious when others invite us to break a commandment of

God, be less than faithful to our covenants, or disregard the words of living prophets. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught modern Israel: "We cannot have the companionship of the Holy Ghost—the medium of individual revelation—if we are in transgression or if we are angry or if we are in rebellion against God's chosen authorities."⁴

BECOMING A HOLY NATION

The experiences of the children of Israel along the road to Mount Sinai were designed by a loving Jehovah to help ancient Israel become "a peculiar treasure unto [Him], . . . a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (see Ex. 19:5–6). At each step along the trail they had received all they needed through His prophet, Moses. They could not have arrived there without him!

Through the Lord's Atonement and through our own choices and efforts, garnished with guidance from a living prophet, we may also become a holy nation if with child-like faith we can join our children in singing, "Now we have a world where people are confused. If you don't believe it, go and watch the news. We can get direction all along our way, if we heed the prophets—follow what they say."⁵ □

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Gospel topics: sustaining leaders, Old Testament, Moses, children of Israel, Jesus Christ

NOTES

1. *Children's Songbook*, 111.
2. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Ex. 15.
3. For a brief description of how many people Moses led through the wilderness, see the Church Educational System Old Testament institute manual, 197.
4. "Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 9.
5. *Children's Songbook*, 111.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

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

1. *If you were given five minutes to speak to the Israelites after the events described in this article, what would you say to them?*
2. *How can we do for our prophets today what Aaron and Hur did for Moses in Exodus 17:8–13?*



PAINTING BY CLARK KELLEY PRICE

At each step along the trail to Mount Sinai, the children of Israel received all they needed through the Lord's prophet, Moses. They could not have arrived there without him!

UNEXPECTED ANSWER



ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD RUSSELL

BY THOMAS PARTRIDGE

The term papers I needed to grade were nowhere to be found at home, and I knew I would not be able to rest until I located them. I had no inkling then of the lesson they would help me learn.

My wife was just leaving to take our daughter to sing in a Christmas concert, and I realized that if I went too, I could go by my office to see if I had left the papers there. So I drove my wife, daughter, and three other choir members to the concert hall 20 miles away. Dropping them off, I swung by my office to search for the papers. I found nothing; they were not there either. Before leaving to rejoin my wife at the concert, I said a quick prayer that I would be able to find the papers when I returned home—though I had no idea where else to look—and that all would be well that evening.

On the way home after the concert, it seemed we were alone on the freeway in the dark, snowy night. We had gone about a third of the way when the right front tire on our van blew out. Fortunately, I was able to control the vehicle and stop safely at the side of the road in the slush. It was 10:30 P.M.

Opening the door, I said another silent prayer that all would be well and we could get home quickly. But it was not to be that easy. After working under the van for 45 minutes, I found that our jack would not fit in place with the tire fully deflated. As I worked, I made a silent observation to heaven that help would be welcome. A bit of bitterness swept over me when I finally realized that I was going to have to walk for help, soaking wet, through the night's cold to a service

station a mile and a half away. Surely someone in one of the vehicles that passed us might have been prompted to stop—but it didn't happen.

I walked to the station and called a tow truck. On my way back to the van, a highway patrolman picked me up and gave me a ride, and after the truck came and the tire was changed, I felt grateful at least that the tow truck driver had charged me a fair price for his help.

By 12:30, my wife and daughter and I were at home getting warm, and I began to look once more for the lost term papers. I felt prompted to look under a stack I had checked before. There they were!

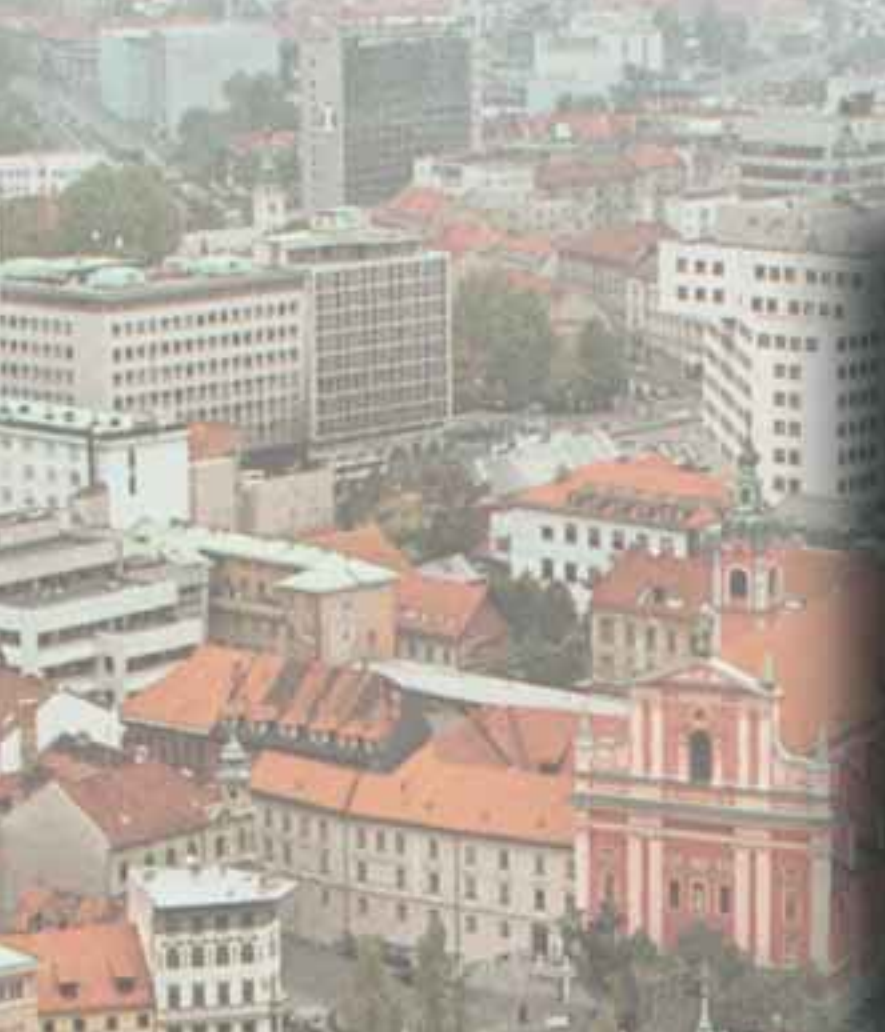
Why, I wondered, had I gone through this experience? It would have been so much less stressful, so much more efficient if I had found the papers when I looked earlier.

Then suddenly in my mind's eye I saw my wife walking alone in a dress and heels down a dark, snowy freeway at 11:00 at night, having left four children alone in the van. Tears filled my eyes as I realized that perhaps Heavenly Father hadn't immediately given me what I had asked for, but rather what I would have wanted in my heart. I would have wanted to be there for my wife in that situation.

I had prayed for relief from immediate difficulties. Instead, I got what I really needed: the peace and assurance that comes from knowing that Heavenly Father is aware of and watching out for my family and me. □

Thomas Partridge is a member of the Parkway 10th Ward, South Jordan Utah Parkway Stake.

Gospel topics: prayer, faith, obedience



*Above: Albin Lotrič, a pioneer Latter-day Saint in Slovenia.
Right: Sacrament meeting in Ljubljana. Left: Mission office of the Slovenia Ljubljana Mission, which was created in 1999 from the Austria Vienna South Mission. Background: Ljubljana, Slovenia.*

PIONEER IN SLOVENIA

He was a stranger in a foreign land. He would live there for only three months before returning to a nation where the Church had not yet been established.



BY MARVIN K. GARDNER

Albin Lotrič has lived in Slovenia all his life, except for three months when he worked in Norway. Those three months changed his life—and helped lead to the establishment of the Church in Slovenia.

Albin was born in 1963 in a small village in the Julian Alps on Europe's Balkan Peninsula. At that time, Slovenia was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. His parents worked in a factory, maintained a small family farm, and taught their children to study and work hard. After graduating from high school, he accepted a job at the company where his parents worked.

His employment was interrupted by a 15-month stint in the Yugoslavian army, where he was exposed to "all kinds of people, good and bad," he says. "I learned that I wasn't supposed to think too much but do only what I was told. I came to believe that all people are selfish and are ready to walk all over those

who are weaker. I became distrustful of others and relied only on myself. I didn't feel any real emotions at that time."

After his military assignment, Albin returned to his job but felt restless and dissatisfied. He eventually quit his job to study computer and information technology at the university. But he was still not finding joy in life. "On weekends my friends and I would have what we called fun—wandering from place to place, drinking alcohol, and flirting with girls we met," he says. "I wasn't happy because I felt empty inside. It all seemed fake."

Then in 1987 he met Boža Gartner, a young woman he had known briefly before, and they began dating. In June 1989, he was accepted as an international student trainee for three months at a company in Stavanger, Norway. He moved to Norway, started his internship, and met the missionaries a few weeks later.

"A young man holding a book stopped me on the street," Albin says. "He said something to me in Norwegian, and his book was written in Norwegian. I explained in English that I didn't understand a word he said and that I had no intention of taking any book, especially one in a language I did not understand." To his surprise the missionary, an American, responded in English and offered to get Albin a copy of the Book of Mormon in English.

Albin politely gave the missionary his address, but he hoped nothing would come of it.

A few days later the missionaries arrived at his door and gave him a copy of the Book of Mormon in English. They later gave him a copy in Croatian, which he could also read. (A Slovenian edition did not yet exist.) Albin's conversations with the missionaries caused him to think about his religious beliefs.

"I had always believed in God," he says. "And I prayed almost daily—prayers I was taught as a Catholic."

Although parts of the Book of Mormon were interesting, he says, "I had no spiritual witness while reading it." And when he attended the Stavanger Branch in Norway, where he was a stranger who knew no one and didn't speak the language, he initially felt uncomfortable, yet he soon liked what he saw and felt at church. The members welcomed him warmly. "They were extremely kind to me," he says. "They showed great interest in me by asking where I was from and what I was doing in the town. They invited me to come again. When I did, they accepted me as a part of their family."

Now he felt more motivated to study the Book of Mormon and pray about it. "I prayed more and more," he says, "waiting to get some kind of answer. Then one day while I was reading the words of Moroni, the answer came—unexpected, unannounced. I felt the Holy Ghost giving me indescribable feelings, and my mind was enlightened. At that same moment I was aware of all my sins, and I began to cry. I had never cried because of a book before. In that moment I knew the Holy Ghost was present with me, and I was thankful to the Lord."

Albin was baptized on his 26th birthday, 19 August 1989. "I was a completely different man now than when I went to Norway in June," he says. "My soul was clean, my sins were forgiven, and I was starting a new life much different from the one before. I felt glad, peaceful, and safe." He also felt the nudges of the Holy Ghost—hinting of spiritual responsibilities that awaited him at home.

When he learned that the Church had not yet been established in Slovenia and that, as far as he knew, no Church members lived there, he realized the importance of learning all he could during his few remaining weeks in Norway. He continued attending Church meetings, family home evenings, and other activities; received the Aaronic Priesthood; had many discussions with missionaries, members, and Church leaders; and read the Doctrine and Covenants in English.

"I was worried about being left on my own back home," he says. "I prayed that God would give me strength to explain my beliefs to my

Right: Lake Bled, located beneath the Alps, shows the beauty of Slovenia. Several families from the Ljubljana Branch live near this lake.



girlfriend, my parents, and others. I knew it would be difficult, but I also knew God would help me as long as I remained worthy."

The closest branch in what was then the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was in Zagreb, Croatia—three hours away from Albin's home in Slovenia. He later learned there was a branch a little more than an hour away, in Klagenfurt, Austria. For more than a year he attended the branch in Austria every Sunday, even though his ability to speak German was limited. "The branch president and all the members were very friendly and kind," he says. He received the Melchizedek Priesthood and served in his first Church callings in the Klagenfurt Branch. And his girlfriend, Boža, often went with him. Sister missionaries taught her the gospel.

"It took me almost six months to get my own testimony," says Boža. "The Book of Mormon had not yet been translated into Slovenian, and it was difficult for me to read it in Croatian. One Sunday in 1990 I went to a nearby grove to pray for the answer, just like Joseph Smith did. The answer came in the middle of the prayer as an exceptional warmth around my heart. I thought at first that this warmth came from the sun—but the sun had already gone down, and the warm feeling was still there. I felt peace and knew from that moment on that God wanted me to accept His gospel." Albin baptized her in the Klagenfurt Branch in March 1990.

In December of that year, the first two full-time missionaries were assigned to Slovenia, and soon the first baptisms in that land took place. In the summer

of 1991, Slovenia proclaimed independence from Yugoslavia. After a tense 10-day war, the matter was peacefully resolved. A few months later, on 22 December 1991, the first branch in Slovenia was organized, with Albin Lotrič as branch president.

The next year, in July 1992, Albin and Boža were married in Slovenia and then sealed in the Frankfurt Germany Temple—the first couple living in Slovenia to be sealed. “I could not have found a better, more understanding wife,” Albin says. “She gives me strength with her love and encouragement. It is especially wonderful to be together in the temple, to review the plan of salvation and enter into an eternal bond together. It gives perspective to all other activities in life.

“My wife and I are trying to plant the seeds of a gospel-centered life in the hearts of our three children,” Albin says, “so they will be strong enough to face the challenges that will come and so they will be able to stand up for their beliefs.” The children are learning about the gospel through family home



evening and scripture study, using the illustrated *Book of Mormon Stories*, which has been translated into Slovenian. Albin and Boža are helping them learn to recognize answers to their simple prayers. “The Lord is blessing us abundantly,” Albin says.

With the Church still in its infancy in Slovenia, President and Sister Lotrič and other pioneering Saints continue to assist in its growth. Sister Lotrič serves in the auxiliaries and is writing a history of the Church in Slovenia. And after serving as branch president for seven years, President Lotrič was called in April 1998 to serve as Slovenia’s first district president. Over the years he has represented the Church on national television and radio, in

newspapers and magazines, and in legal matters.

Meanwhile his career has blossomed. With university degrees in business administration and computer science, he currently works in the information technology department of the Slovenian ministry of finance. “To live according to the teachings of this Church requires many demands of the members,” he says. “But I know from my own experience that the resulting blessings bring much more joy than any earthly thing.”

One of his most memorable assignments has been to serve on the translation team for the upcoming



Above: In 1992 Albin and Boža Lotrič were the first Slovenian couple sealed in the temple (shown with Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander, then a member of the Europe Area Presidency, and his wife, LeAnn). Left: Boža and Albin enjoy teaching the gospel to their children, Benjamin, Lea, and Flora.

Slovenian edition of the Book of Mormon. “When the Book of Mormon comes forth with all its divinity and power,” says President Lotrič, “the gates of heaven will open wide. The Spirit will testify even more mightily to the people of Slovenia that the word of God has once more been revealed to the children of men and that there is no name given under the heavens but the name of Jesus Christ through which salvation can come.”

In July 1999, nearly 10 years after Albin’s baptism, the Slovenia Ljubljana Mission—which includes various countries of the former Yugoslavia—was created. In Slovenia itself, a nation of two million inhabitants, there are now about 250 members, one district, and three branches—in Ljubljana, Celje, and Maribor. Couples have been sealed in the temple. Young men and women from Slovenia are serving full-time missions in various parts of the world. And members in Slovenia can now receive the *Liahona* in their own language.

Was it worth anyone’s time to befriend a stranger in a foreign land and teach him the gospel, knowing that in three months he would return to his home in a nation where the Church had not yet been established?

“The ways of our Lord are sometimes unpredictable and beyond human imagination,” says Albin Lotrič. “He chose a wonderful way to present the gospel to me.” □

Marvin K. Gardner is managing editor for the Liahona, the Church’s international magazine.

Gospel topics: conversion, leadership, Book of Mormon, worldwide Church

SEEKING SOLUTIONS

BY MARY ELLEN W. SMOOT
Relief Society General President

*No problem is so big or so small
that the Savior cannot help us solve it.*

We each have burdens to bear. No matter who we are, what we do, or where we go, each one of us will have difficulties. Problems are part of mortality. But when solved with wisdom and in accordance with gospel principles, those very problems can be gateways to eternity. As we walk the path of righteousness and turn to the Lord, we will come to know the power of God that is within each one of us.

One of the most important skills we can acquire is the ability to solve problems. Individually and as a people, we will make greater progress and do so more joyfully if we focus on solutions rather than problems—whatever the problems may be.

I would like to share four suggestions regarding problem solving. If at first this counsel seems contrary to your way of thinking, I pray that you will keep an open mind, study it out, and put it to the test—always remembering that “there is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated” (D&C 130:20).

CONSIDER WHERE YOU ARE HEADED

My first suggestion is to *stop and consider where you are headed*. When faced with a problem, search your soul to see if your present thoughts and actions are leading to a solution, feeding the problem, or possibly even creating more problems for you. You have probably heard the old adage that when you see you are digging yourself into a hole, stop digging! Seek for perspective greater than your own, and take an outsider’s look at the situation. The Proverbs teach us that only “fools despise



wisdom and instruction” (Prov. 1:7).

Let me illustrate. When I was about 12 years old, my girlfriend and I were in her barn saddling a horse for a joyride. Suddenly her family’s goose and gander came through the barn door, honking and flapping their wings. They were headed right for me, so I started backing away. The geese became even more excited and started pecking at me fiercely. The farther I inched away, the madder they

got. Mercifully, my friend yelled over the racket, “You are backing into their nest.” If only I had known that a few moments sooner, I could have walked toward them, away from the problem, and my legs would not have been so black and blue.

I learned an important lesson that day about going in the right direction—and about valuing another’s viewpoint. Sometimes we become convinced that our perceptions are correct, that we are doing all we can do, or that if we simply run faster or longer our problems will be solved. But nothing will get better if we are going the wrong way. I have discovered a valuable exercise. Occasionally I take a good look at my life, my daily habits, my thoughts, and certainly my actions. Then I ask myself: “Am I headed in the right direction? Will my actions today lead to greater peace and happiness tomorrow?” If not, I must be humble enough to realize that I may need to change direction.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught in general conference that repentance is an essential element of the gospel: “Repentance is not optional” (“The Path to Peace and Joy,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 25). It is part of walking the paths of righteousness. If ever our performance does



As we maintain an attitude of reverence during the sacrament, we receive spiritual strength that can help us go in the right direction.

not adhere to correct and eternal principles, if the path we are traveling is pulling us away from eternal goals, we must make a course correction.

So often we hear people complaining about what a wicked world we live in. They say it is simply too hard to be virtuous. "Everyone is doing it," they rationalize. We do face temptations, and armies of filth do surround us, but we do not need to be their victims. We can each decide for ourselves ways to safeguard our virtue—ways to keep us going in the right direction. There is no sin that is worth the price you have to pay for it. Determine right now to put on the whole armor of God and neither retreat into iniquity nor surrender to vice.

In our world today, what are you and I going to do to stay clean? I will offer a few tips. First, dress modestly and neatly. How we adorn ourselves has so much to do with how we think and feel and how we make others think and feel in our presence. President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) taught:

"Do not underestimate the important symbolic and actual effect of appearance. Persons who are well groomed and modestly dressed invite the companionship of the Spirit of our Father in Heaven and are able to exercise a wholesome influence upon those around them. Persons who are unkempt and careless about their appearance, or adopt the visual symbols of those who often oppose our ideals, expose themselves and persons around them to influences that are degrading and dissonant. Outward appearance is often a reflection of inward tendencies" (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee* [1996], 220).

We can ask ourselves, "Does the way I dress encourage others to think good, righteous thoughts or base, ignoble thoughts?" Consider how we would feel if we were to meet the Savior today. Would He be pleased with how we have chosen to adorn our bodies? Let us be willing to take a righteous stand and look like it too!

For women and men alike, modesty is a building block of virtue. Why? Because our bodies are sacred gifts from God that actually give us power over Satan. Satan never has had a body, and he would like nothing more than to have us underestimate this gift. When we wear clothing that is unseemly or too tight, that exposes or otherwise belittles the sacredness of our bodies, we play with fire. And sometimes the scars of even a small burn mar our souls for a long, long time.

Back away from the fire and head in the right direction.

Let me give another safeguard of virtue that will help you to head in the right direction: Be reverent. Especially during sacrament meetings, remember the purpose for which you are there. Listen to the truths being taught. You will be blessed as you go seeking to find solutions to your problems. The sacrament is a time to examine our lives over the past week, ask for forgiveness, and recommit. It is not a time for back rubs, whisperings about last night's party, or contemplations about the next week's activities. During the sacrament and throughout the week, let reverence lead to repentance.

The Savior has made it possible for us to become clean from sin and return to our Father in Heaven. In his conference talk, Elder Scott reflected, "It must pain Him deeply to see the pointless agony both in this life and beyond the veil that accompany the unrepentant sinner after all He did so that we need not suffer" (*Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 26).

If you have not yet felt the cleansing power of the Atonement, do not delay. Do not let yourself get any more bumps or bruises. Yield a broken heart and a contrite

spirit. Change direction if need be. Face the problem, and with sincere sorrow and true humility submit to the Lord. He is all-knowing and perfectly loving. He simply could not lead us astray. His promise is sure: "Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive" (D&C 88:63).

ASK, "WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?"

All of this leads to my second suggestion for solving problems. *When faced with a problem, humbly ask the question "What am I going to do about it?"*

From His prophets on down, the Lord has empowered His servants to come unto Him, to repent, and to seek for solutions. Not alone, but with God's inspiration and support, prophets have had to solve enormous problems. Think of Nephi with his broken bow. Think of the brother of Jared with his dark boats. Think of Captain Moroni in the heat of battle. Any and every Church leader has had to "study it out" (D&C 9:8), humbly present a solution to the Lord, and



Through earnest soul-searching, studying the scriptures, and prayer, we can find answers to the problems we face.

then faithfully act upon it as guided by the Spirit. The Lord perfectly sustains, but He usually does not solve problems for us. Surely He could have given Nephi a new bow. He could have just commanded the brother of Jared to bring Him some rocks. He could have won all of Moroni's battles for him. But higher laws were at stake. Learning and growing had to take place.

This process is vital to our spiritual growth and cannot take place as long as we look to other people, circumstances, programs, or institutions to solve problems for us. President Brigham Young (1807–77) taught, "Instead of searching after what the Lord is going to do for us, let us inquire what we can do for ourselves" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1954], 293). Then we can take it to the Lord for confirmation.

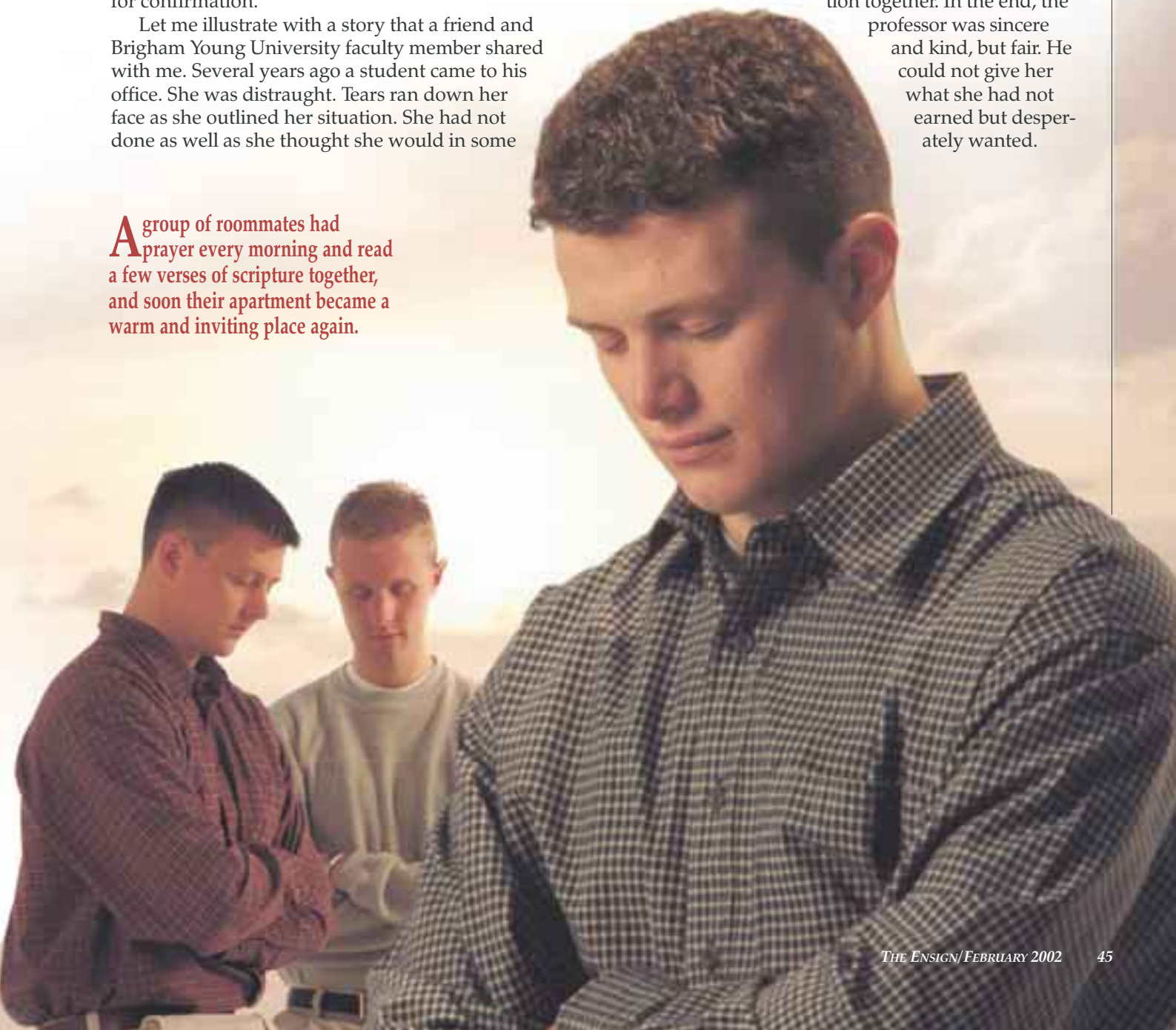
Let me illustrate with a story that a friend and Brigham Young University faculty member shared with me. Several years ago a student came to his office. She was distraught. Tears ran down her face as she outlined her situation. She had not done as well as she thought she would in some

of her classes, and if she did not get a high enough grade in his class, she would be deported to her country of origin. She felt as if her whole future rested upon his decision. With that preface, she pleaded, "What grade are you going to give me?" The professor was warm and compassionate but forthright. "What have you earned?" he responded.

Together they went through the ledger. They tallied her points, even added in some extra credit she had not yet completed, and determined that her scores were far, far below the university's standard. The professor felt it would not be fair to other students who had studied, sacrificed, and rightfully earned their grades to raise her mark as high as it would need to go. He counseled with her. They agonized over the situation together. In the end, the

professor was sincere and kind, but fair. He could not give her what she had not earned but desperately wanted.

A group of roommates had prayer every morning and read a few verses of scripture together, and soon their apartment became a warm and inviting place again.



Needless to say, she was quite upset. She had to leave BYU. Upon returning to her home, she enrolled in a community college. She studied and worked hard. Over the course of time she became committed to academic achievement. She began to recognize the Lord's hand in her life. She served a mission. Two and a half years later, she returned to BYU a different person. Ready to shoulder the responsibility of her own actions, she had become a conscientious student and a better person. More humble and more mature, she looked up her former professor and thanked him for being firm. With love and respect, he had invited her to do some soul-searching, and maybe for the first time in her life when confronted with a problem, she had really asked herself the question "What am I going to do about this?" And that made all the difference.

I invite you to do the same about whatever may be troubling you at this time. Be prayerful. Be responsible when facing a dilemma. Ask yourself, "What am I going to do about this?" You could have the same kind of dialogue with the Lord that the student had with her teacher.

I realize that many of your challenges may not be of your own making. You may have inherent disadvantages; you may have been treated badly; you may have been wronged. But no matter what your problem, you can take charge of your life and go forward with faith. You may not be able to change other people—most likely you will not. You may not be able to change everything about your circumstances, but the power is in you to determine how you will respond and what kind of a person you will be.

Some college students who roomed together shared how they worked to solve a problem. They had been having some friction in their group. Although no one had been blatantly unkind, a competitive feeling was pushing these friends apart and making them dwell on their inadequacies. So one night the young men decided to take some positive steps. They determined to have prayer in their apartment each morning and read a few verses in the scriptures together. They set goals to sincerely encourage and support each other. Simple though this remedy may sound, it made all the difference.

Through our Church callings, we receive numerous blessings and become better people.



One kind word led to another. One thoughtful act invited another in return. It did not take long before the situation had turned around and their apartment became a warm and inviting place again. These young men were willing to ask, What am I going to do about this? And the Lord blessed them with a solution to their problem.

Even as I encourage such self-reliance, I want to make something clear. True self-reliance implies a humble dependence upon Deity. President Gordon B. Hinckley has reminded us: "None of us is wise enough to make it on our own. We need the help, the wisdom, the guidance of the Almighty in reaching those decisions that are so tremendously important in our lives. There is no substitute for prayer. There is no greater resource" ("Your Greatest Challenge, Mother," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 99).

So be prayerful as you evaluate yourself and your circumstances. Humble and sincere consideration of the question "What am I going to do about it?" could be an incredible turning point for you. When we sincerely and submissively search our hearts, we come to know what the Lord would have us do about the challenges we face.

KNOW THE VALUE OF CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

My third suggestion is *know that the organizations of the Church can help strengthen us in our problem solving*. We have been told that the Church will never be larger than our ward boundaries. Each of us has an opportunity to be an instrument in the Lord's hands in making our ward so strong and filled with so much love, devotion, and acceptance that everyone feels a part of our ward.

The organizations of the Church are set up to teach us how to come to Christ. It does not matter what position we hold; we can love and support our leaders. We need the older members and their experience, we need the younger members with their zest for life, we need those who have suffered through divorce and health problems, and we need those who have not yet married but are capable and willing to serve. We need each other. We need visiting teachers and home teachers who are sincerely interested in those they visit and realize the importance of their calling as they strive to reach the one.

WE HAVE INHERITED POWERFUL RESOURCES



"When you say, 'I can't! I can't solve my problems!' I want to

thunder out, 'Don't you realize who you are? Haven't you learned yet that you are a son or a daughter of Almighty God? Do you not know that there are powerful resources inherited from Him that you can call upon to give you steadiness and courage and great power?'"

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Self-Reliance," *Ensign*, Aug. 1975, 88.

As we attend priesthood meeting, which is for all worthy men, and Relief Society, which is the Lord's organization for women, let us ask how we may assist the teacher or leader. Let us attend our meetings to find out who needs our help and what we can do to further the work of the Lord.

Do your best in your Church callings. It is through these callings that we become better people and we develop our leadership skills. Each of us should look forward to the blessings that come from Church assignments.

BE AN INFLUENCE FOR GOOD

My fourth suggestion is *be an influence for good on others*. At school and church and with friends and family, extend a loving hand of service. It is not enough for us to

simply attend our meetings and fulfill Church callings. It is not enough to just "get by." Of all people, we should approach this mortality as a grand adventure and fill it with all the wonder, mystery, love, and meaning that we anticipated before we came here.

Imagine a situation in which your great dream in life was to travel to a foreign country, but when you arrived, all you did was sit listlessly in your hotel room, filled with worry, fear, desperation, and sadness about the opportunities awaiting you. Similarly, we are all here in this marvelous and wonderful world, living this magnificent adventure called mortality. Can we afford to spend our lives brooding, being bored, or being bothered?

Blessed with the eternal perspective the gospel gives, we will rise to the full measure of our abilities to bless and serve those around us and thereby experience a full measure of joy. We are in this together. When we return to the loving arms of our Heavenly Father, how many of our brothers and sisters and loved ones will we bring with us?

The spirit of service of which I speak as a means of overcoming our own problems has been ignited in the Relief Society organization. Relief Societies all over the world have reached out to their communities and are serving in the name of the Relief Society organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Priesthood leaders have witnessed firsthand the joy and testimony that develop from service and have made service projects both family and ward activities. Less-active members have returned to full

activity, and new members have been brought into the fold through service.

President Hinckley has urged us to help increase the number of converts. We now have more than 11 million members of the Church. What are we doing to retain and strengthen each member? What can we do to share the gospel with others? The Lord needs each of us to reach out and touch the hearts of those around us. No one is exempt. President Hinckley does it, and so can we!

Not long ago I started praying for a missionary experience. I added that sentence to every prayer, and I promise you our Father in Heaven answers our prayers—sometimes so quickly that we are in awe. Try it! It will strengthen you and help you to realize you are on His errand and angels are there to assist you. Missionary work is revitalizing and energizing. Involvement in it helps us overlook our own concerns.

Recently a devoted wife and mother of nine children had a faith-promoting experience sharing the gospel. Now, if *she* has time to be a missionary, we all do! A few years ago, this sister and her family hosted three young boys with a boys' choir during their stay in Salt Lake City. She gave each of them a Book of Mormon with her testimony and her family picture. John, one of the choir boys, for whatever reason, left his copy of the Book of Mormon on the bus when he returned home.

A businessman who happened to be named John found the book. For quite some time the book was shifted around to several locations in his office. One day John opened the book and noticed someone had written a note inside the front of it. The note began, "Dear John." Since his name is John, he read the note.

In the meantime, Laurie, a coworker and a less-active member of the Church, developed a strong friendship with John. They started dating.

Laurie and John had some meaningful talks about religion. Faced with some heartfelt questions, John turned to that persistent copy of the Book of Mormon and read some passages. He started going to church with Laurie.

You know the rest of the story. After they had been married about nine months, the missionaries knocked on their door, and John started taking the discussions. John was baptized and confirmed a member of the

Church. John looked up the family whose picture was in his Book of Mormon.

Just before Christmas, John called and explained how instrumental this sister and her family had been in his conversion. Needless to say, this faithful family was excited to hear from John. They invited him to their home and continued to love and fellowship him. They later accompanied John and his wife, Laurie, as they were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple.

Brothers and sisters, we have the truth, and someday we will have many regrets if we do not share what we have. Let us reach inside ourselves and give our best away. Whenever we truly give of ourselves, we forget about our own problems and garner new-found strength.



Because a sister was willing to share her testimony, a man became converted to the gospel and was later sealed to his wife in the temple.

Would you think of the four suggestions I have given regarding problem solving?

1. Stop and consider where you are headed.

2. Humbly ask the question "What am I going to do about it?"

3. Know that the organizations of the Church can help strengthen us in our problem solving.

4. Be an influence for good on others.

I promise that following these steps will help you find solutions to your challenges.

Our Father in Heaven knows our potential, and

if we will make Him a part of our daily lives, if we humbly and sincerely strive to do His will, we will be blessed with solutions. However, even in all our efforts to solve problems correctly, we may have moments of wondering if God is mindful of us. In Doctrine and Covenants 6:20 it says: "Therefore treasure up these words in thy heart. Be faithful and diligent in keeping the commandments of God, and I will encircle thee in the arms of my love."

Brothers and sisters, in the most personal way, let me assure you that the Lord is mindful of you. He knows you, loves you, and wants you to succeed. Our Savior made problem solving possible. No problem is so big or so small that He cannot or will not help you solve it. So to all who seek for solutions, I lovingly invite you to come unto Him. □

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on 14 November 2000.

Gospel topics: problem solving, moral purity, self-reliance, Church organizations, example

Selections from Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley



WORD OF WISDOM

"The Lord expects each of us to observe the Word of Wisdom. What a wonderful thing it is, this Word of Wisdom. It doesn't impose burdens on us. It gives us blessings. A professor at the University of California at Los Angeles has carried on an intensive study over a period of years, and he has reached the conclusion, and published that conclusion, that the Mormon people, speaking of averages, live 10 years longer than their peers. What is 10 years of life worth? Think of it. Think of the blessings which come to us as a gift of our Father in Heaven. And in addition to that is the marvelous promise that we shall run and not be weary and walk and not faint, and that hidden treasures of knowledge shall be given unto us (see D&C 89:19–20). That doesn't mean we'll be the brightest people in the world in science or in any other temporal thing. But it does mean

that the Holy Ghost will reveal unto us the things of God for our great blessing. No one can afford to violate the Word of Wisdom" (meeting, Mexico City, Mexico, 8 Nov. 1997).

NOTHING MATTERS MORE

"If this gospel is true, what else matters? If it is true, it becomes the most important thing on the face of the earth. It becomes a declaration from the Almighty God to His children upon the earth that He has spoken again and parted the curtains and established once more His great and true Church to bless the lives of all of His children who will accept the gospel and live according to its pattern. I'm grateful to be able to say that I think that every man and woman . . . who is a member of this Church could stand and say with conviction from his or her heart that it is true and nothing matters more" (meeting, Cape Town, South Africa, 20 Feb. 1998).

OUR BELIEFS

"We get on our knees and we ask the Lord to help us live in obedience to His commandments. We get on our feet and resolve to be better people than we were when we knelt down. Our beliefs will govern our actions. God help us to be those who are not faithless, but believing!" (meeting, Burlington, Vermont, 14 Oct. 1998).

HOPE

"People are not without hope. Everybody ought to recognize that in the most dire circumstances

there is an element of hope, that people can recover from what they have done, that they can do better, that they can turn around, that they can improve and increase their happiness by so doing" (press interview regarding *Standing for Something*, 11 Feb. 2000).

THE BLESSINGS OF THE TEMPLE

"My brothers and sisters, you who have not been to the house of God, I plead with you this morning with all the power that I have to begin today to repent of the past, to get your lives in order so that you may go there and bind to you those whom you love most and who are most dear to you. . . . Trust in the Lord, and as His servant I feel to promise you that He will bless you" (regional conference, Santiago, Chile, 26 Apr. 1999).

OBEYING HIS WORD

"People argue over whether the Word of Wisdom is simply the word of the Lord or a commandment. What difference does it make? The word of the Lord becomes a commandment to me, and I am so very grateful for that marvelous thing which we call the Word of Wisdom" (meeting, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, 31 July 1998).

THE LORD EXPECTS MUCH

"The Lord expects so very much of you members [of the Church]. He expects that you will live the gospel, that you will keep the commandments, that you will be men and women of honesty and integrity and faith, that you will live the Word of Wisdom. . . . The time to begin living the gospel is now. . . . Be Latter-day Saints. Bring honor to this Church. Show that you love it by following its teachings, and God will bless you" (meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, 13 June 2000). □

TOBACCO

QUITTING FOR GOOD

BY JANET BRIGHAM

Understanding the struggles of those addicted to tobacco helps us be more loving and less judgmental in supporting their efforts to escape its grasp.

One December night several years ago, I went Christmas caroling with several members of our ward. Among those we visited were several Latter-day Saints who smoked. The bishop, who was with us, had become friends with them over the years. He knew their challenges with tobacco, and they knew he loved them. They also knew that he hoped they would quit smoking.

Spiritual motivation is often high for members or potential converts to quit using tobacco, since being tobacco-free is a requirement for baptism and temple attendance. The physical challenges of quitting tobacco use are daunting. Most smokers, such as those we visited on that cold December evening, find themselves caught up in the all-too-familiar trap of dependence on tobacco.

People I meet who learn that I study tobacco use sometimes ask me: Is there hope for tobacco users? Can a smoker overcome the physical addiction and habitual behaviors of tobacco use? The answer is a resounding *yes*. Not only is quitting possible, but it is also highly beneficial. It is never too late to stop using tobacco. Quitting at any age and in any state of health improves one's health.¹ Nonsmoking

CO



Latter-day Saints need to understand the physical and spiritual struggles intrinsic to quitting tobacco in order to provide love and nonjudgmental support for others in their efforts to put tobacco aside.

FOLLOWING THE PATTERN OF ADDICTION

Tobacco contains an addictive substance called *nicotine*. Most people who use tobacco regularly become addicted to it.² Nicotine delivered through cigarettes is comparable to illegal drugs such as heroin and cocaine in its power to addict.³ In addition to physical addiction, smoking cigarettes or cigars or using smokeless forms of tobacco provides sensations many users perceive as pleasurable.⁴ Tobacco users often rely on tobacco as a way to cope with the stresses and demands of life.⁵

Only half of all smokers eventually quit permanently, and most who do succeed in quitting try several times before they finally become completely tobacco-free.⁶ However, *tobacco dependence* is a condition that medical authorities identify as a treatable medical problem,⁷ even though some of the effects of nicotine on the brain are believed to be permanent.⁸

As a result of continued exposure to nicotine, the body needs nicotine on a regular basis to stave off a distinct constellation of unpleasant symptoms called

withdrawal. When as little as even one cigarette (or one “dose” of nicotine) is missed, a smoker typically craves tobacco. As abstinence continues, the smoker is likely to become irritable, have difficulty concentrating and sleeping, or experience digestive problems, intense hunger, cravings for sweets, and powerful cravings for tobacco. As the user continues to miss doses of nicotine, the symptoms will peak for a few difficult days and then will gradually subside during the next two weeks. Within a month of quitting, most people can be relatively free of these symptoms, although withdrawal symptoms are different for every smoker.⁹

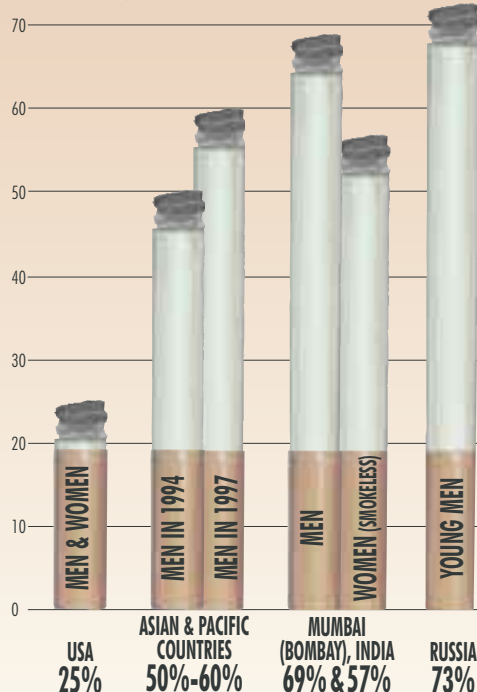
However, one symptom can recur suddenly and without warning throughout an ex-smoker’s lifetime: an intense *craving* for tobacco. A sudden, stressful event often prompts this craving. Sometimes being in a social setting or experiencing a familiar emotion can also trigger a craving. Whatever prompts it, the sensation of craving is the single greatest factor leading to the return to tobacco use, also called a *relapse*.¹⁰

Visiting with a skilled professional can help smokers quit and prevent a relapse.

WIDESPREAD USE, DEADLY CONSEQUENCES

About one-third of adults in the world use tobacco, most of them starting as children or adolescents. Tobacco use reaches into all economic, educational, and social levels, and in some way touches the life of nearly every person on earth. Consider the following:

- In the United States, about one-fourth of the adult population uses cigarettes. In Asian and Pacific countries, smoking rates among men rose from 50 percent in 1994 to 60 percent in 1997. In Mumbai (Bombay), India, 69 percent of men use tobacco, and 57 percent of women use smokeless tobacco. In Russia, the smoking rate among young men is 73 percent.
- Worldwide some 700 million children are exposed to secondhand tobacco smoke.
- Women are using tobacco in increasing numbers even in cultures where they traditionally have not smoked. In the United States, the average age at which girls experiment with tobacco is 12 years.
- As few as four cigarettes may be enough to set someone who experiments with tobacco on a path to becoming a regular smoker.
- The consequences of tobacco use are fatal for about four million people worldwide who die every year of tobacco-related disease, including heart and circulatory disease and cancer. □



Sources available upon request to the Ensign.

CHOOSING HEALTH

Obviously, the best and healthiest choice is to avoid the use of tobacco throughout life. However, millions of people do not know of the health risks associated with tobacco, while others choose to ignore the risks. Tobacco use for many is an unfortunate and regrettable choice made with serious consequences.

The Lord's instructions in Doctrine and Covenants 89 cautioning against the use of tobacco are a blessing for those who follow them. This revelation was given through the Prophet Joseph Smith at Kirtland, Ohio, on 27 February 1833. As a consequence of the early brethren using tobacco in their meeting, the Prophet was led to ponder upon the matter and soon inquired of the Lord concerning it. This revelation, known as the Word of Wisdom, warns of "evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men" and specifically cautions against the use of tobacco. It states, "Tobacco is not for the body, neither for the belly, and is not good for man" (D&C 89:4, 8).

Armed with this knowledge, those who adhere to the Word of Wisdom can avoid the harmful physical and spiritual effects of addiction to tobacco, and they can provide loving support to others who want to stop

using tobacco, particularly those who are striving to participate fully in the Church.

Staying tobacco-free is not just a one-time process of

quitting. It also involves avoiding relapse throughout one's life. The ongoing process of overcoming an addiction to tobacco can enhance confidence, self-assurance, and spiritual strength. In this, as in all of our righteous endeavors, God stands ready to help in ways that are best for each of us. Seeking spiritual strength from Deity through prayer and fasting can help in overcoming the challenge. Toward this end, a priesthood blessing, with promises bestowed through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, can also be valuable.

HOW DOES A SMOKER STOP?

Because no single condition leads to tobacco dependence, no single solution cures smokers of their dependence on cigarettes. Some people are able to quit smoking easily, while some find quitting so difficult that they do not quit even when facing tobacco's serious health problems. Smokers who believe that quitting smoking will be easy or that God will make it easy for them may become disillusioned if they experience the normal withdrawal symptoms or if they relapse back to smoking. Therefore, it is wise for smokers to take time to plan this important change carefully and prayerfully.

Successful treatment can include at least three components: (1) counseling and advice from a skilled, knowledgeable professional, with a focus on developing problem-solving skills, overcoming barriers to quitting, and preventing relapse; (2) support from friends and family members; and (3) the possible correct, careful use of legal stop-smoking medications, including nicotine replacement and other drugs tested for safety and effectiveness.

A local hospital or clinic may offer a stop-smoking group, and a health professional may be able to provide expert advice about medications that can help ease the physical and emotional discomfort of withdrawal symptoms. A *nicotine replacement* medication helps control withdrawal symptoms over a period of weeks or months while the ex-smoker gradually becomes accustomed to living without tobacco.¹¹ Nicotine replacement products are not designed to replace nicotine permanently; rather, the ex-smoker tapers off the nicotine replacement medication over a period of weeks.

The least successful way to stop smoking is to try to quit all at once, or "cold turkey," without any kind of help. Quitting this way may

YOU MUST NOT SMOKE



"Observe the Word of Wisdom. You cannot smoke; you must not smoke. You must not chew tobacco. . . . You must rise above these things which beckon with a seductive call. Be prayerful. Call on the Lord in faith, and He will hear your prayers. He loves you. He wishes to bless you."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "Converts and Young Men," *Ensign*, May 1997, 47.

BREAKING THE CHAINS OF TOBACCO USE



“God help us to shake off and break the chains with which we are

bound. With God’s help they can be shaken off by faith, works, prayer, constant commitment, and self-discipline. May we have the will and strength to shake off the chains that would control and destroy our progress.”

Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) of the Quorum of the Twelve, “Shake Off the Chains with Which Ye Are Bound,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 13.

seem like a good idea at the time, but statistics show that only a very small percentage of those who attempt to quit this way will still be smoke-free a year later. The work of quitting smoking involves not only the *initial actions* of becoming tobacco-free, but also the lifetime task of *remaining* tobacco-free.

WHAT CAN FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND WARD LEADERS DO TO HELP?

Providing spiritual and social support for those who struggle with tobacco dependence is a role that ward leaders and other ward members can fulfill well. Home teachers and visiting teachers may be able to offer encouragement as smokers undertake this life-changing process. Ward leaders can also provide an excellent service by directing a tobacco user toward stop-smoking treatment available through hospital clinics, community centers, and organizations such as the American Lung Association and the American Cancer Society.

Remember that no one, not even someone as close as a spouse or a parent, can force another to quit. The love and acceptance of others and the awareness that others need us can be among the strongest motivations for quitting. Other strong motivations are the desire to obey the Lord’s counsel in the Word of Wisdom and the goal of receiving the blessings of faithfulness in the Church. Even so, motivation to quit develops over time. Motivation can be seen as a series of stages rather than as an all-or-nothing condition. Any movement through these stages, even a

small change in attitude, is a step forward.

HOW CAN A PARENT KEEP CHILDREN FROM USING TOBACCO?

For some young people, using tobacco—either smoking it or chewing it—is little more than a statement of rebellion. In their naïveté, they rarely intend to become dependent on it. To help them, parents can work on opening communication and being supportive.

The more a child knows about tobacco and its addictive nature, the better he or she is prepared to avoid it. This education can be accomplished through guided discussions with peers in church and school settings. Many schools and health settings also have reliable pamphlets and books about tobacco.

Experience shows that prevention is not accomplished through one program at school, one lesson in family home evening, or one lesson at church. Efforts toward prevention need to be ongoing. Parents, teachers, family, and friends who do not use tobacco serve as important models.

Support from family and friends is essential to becoming free of tobacco use.



7 TIPS TO PREVENT TOBACCO USE

BY GORDON B. LINDSAY

1. The **example** of nonsmoking parents is basic to the prevention of tobacco use.
2. A **strong parent-child relationship** allows discussion of the physical and spiritual benefits of living the Word of Wisdom.
3. **Church activity** has a strong protective effect and provides friends who do not use tobacco.
4. Well-conceived **school programs** help youth see both the long-term and short-term risks of tobacco use.
5. Skills that help youth **recognize and resist peer pressure** are essential. When youth learn that the vast majority of adults and teens choose not to smoke, they are more likely to choose not to smoke also.
6. Teaching children to **recognize the unrealistic glamorization** of smoking in the media helps them see deceptive messages in cigarette advertising.
7. Adults can be anxiously engaged in implementing **social policies that deter smoking**. State and national tobacco control programs, including indoor clean-air laws, increased taxes on cigarettes, and regulation of the tobacco industry, have demonstrated impressive reductions in tobacco use. Well-funded, sustained anti-smoking media campaigns are also effective in reducing cigarette consumption. □

Parents sometimes blame themselves for not doing more to keep their children from using tobacco. They may feel that they have failed to set a good example or failed to insulate their children from bad influences. Parents cannot make decisions for their children, but they can teach them correct principles, love them, and help them.

AVOIDING PERMANENT RELAPSE

Smokers who have difficulty quitting may feel discouraged after numerous unsuccessful attempts to quit. In fact, many tobacco users relapse several times before they quit for good. Fortunately, a return to smoking need not be permanent. An ex-tobacco user who relapses can use the experience as a way to learn more about the process of quitting. For example, perhaps ex-smokers relapse when they get together with friends who still smoke or chew tobacco. Rather than considering this as a failure, they can learn to manage situations that prompt them to relapse. They may need to ask friends

and family to avoid using tobacco in their presence, and they may avoid situations where tobacco is being used. Church can be a useful setting in this regard, particularly since someone who has

quit using tobacco will be surrounded largely by others who do not use tobacco.

CURBING SECONDHAND SMOKE

Exposure to *environmental tobacco smoke*, commonly called secondhand smoke, can result in serious health problems for nonsmokers living or working with smokers. This danger is especially serious for children and can be life-threatening to infants.¹²

A parent who smokes may not be aware that his or her smoking serves as a model for children and can also result in serious health and behavioral consequences. Children should not be exposed to tobacco smoke, particularly in enclosed spaces such as automobiles or rooms of a house. In keeping a child's environment smoke-free, a family member is likely to find that nagging and criticizing those who smoke are not effective. A better strategy is to negotiate the need for physical distance between the cigarette smoke and the nonsmoking family members, while maintaining an attitude of love, support, and companionship.

Similarly, children should not be allowed to play with cigarettes or cigarette butts; thousands of children are poisoned each year from ingesting tobacco products. Further, a pregnant woman should make certain she does not use tobacco and is not exposed to others' tobacco smoke. These are not merely guidelines to be followed at one's convenience; these are matters of health and well-being for all nonsmokers, particularly children.



RECOMMENDED WEB SITES

1. www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco This Web site includes a downloadable brochure, "You Can Quit Smoking," developed by the U.S. Public Health Service. This brochure offers the best evidence-based advice currently available for smokers and other tobacco users. Copies are available by calling 1-800-358-9295 or writing to Publications Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 8547, Silver Spring, MD 20907-8547.
2. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/how2quit.htm The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provide stop-smoking advice.
3. www.stop-tabac.ch This site, designed by Swiss university researchers, offers a well-designed questionnaire that is linked to personalized advice that can help a smoker plan to stop and avoid relapse. It is available in French, English, German, Danish, and Italian.
4. www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/womenandtobacco/ This report from the U.S. Surgeon General presents information about women and tobacco. Note the links on the page to additional helpful information to help women and girls quit using tobacco.
5. www.nida.nih.gov/researchreports/nicotine/nicotine.html This report provides scientifically sound information about nicotine and tobacco. To obtain printed copies of this report, call or write the National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information, P.O. Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20852, 1-800-729-6686. Ask for NIDA Research Report-Nicotine Addiction: NIH Publication No. 01-4342. □



REACHING OUT

A smoker who has support from friends and family, who seeks help and advice from a health professional, and who uses stop-smoking medications appropriately has the best chances for quitting permanently. In addition, through the process of quitting tobacco use, as with any other process of improving life, all persons can benefit from the spiritual strength and guidance available from divine sources.

People addicted to tobacco may feel alone and hopelessly mired in their condition. They may assume all the blame for harming themselves and their loved ones. In reaching out to them, Latter-day Saints should adopt the attitude of the Lord: "I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick" (Ezek. 34:16). □

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Gospel topics: Word of Wisdom, self-discipline, faith, prayer

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POWERFUL CRAVINGS, POWERFUL MOTIVATIONS

In giving up tobacco, motivation is of utmost importance. The nature of eternal blessings can provide that motivation.

BY GORDON B. LINDSAY

The more smoking-cessation techniques a person uses, the greater the likelihood of success. Help may be obtained from professionals, family, medication, fasting, prayer, and priesthood blessings. Psalm 55:22 encourages us to "cast [our] burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain [us]." Following are the stories of two Latter-day Saints who successfully quit smoking using all the resources available to them.



"I WANTED A TEMPLE MARRIAGE"

Parker* was raised in an active Latter-day Saint family but drifted into the use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs in his midteen years. These addictions pulled him into a decade of inactivity, which he periodically yet unsuccessfully tried to put behind him. By the time he met and fell in love with Ashley, a faithful Latter-day Saint, he had pulled himself away from drugs and alcohol through attending Alcoholics Anonymous but couldn't seem to break the stranglehold of tobacco.

As he talked with Ashley about the gospel's place in their future marriage, he had an increased desire to return to activity and a growing faith that God could help him.

"I will never forget the day when I had my last cigarette," says Parker. "Even though I was down to one, two, or three cigarettes a day or every other day, it seemed impossible to get the power of nicotine out of me. I determined this one day that I was going to stop no matter what. But as the day wore on, the cravings for a cigarette got stronger and stronger until I could hardly control myself. All I could think of was not giving in. I prayed silently all the time. It became almost

*Names have been changed.

FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH



“The Lord has commanded you to take good care of your body. To do this, observe

the Word of Wisdom, found in Doctrine and Covenants 89. . . . Never use tobacco products, such as cigarettes, snuff, chewing tobacco, cigars, and pipe tobacco. They are very addictive and will damage your body and shorten your life. . . . Never let Satan or others lead you to think that breaking the Word of Wisdom will make you happier or more attractive.”

For the Strength of Youth (2001), 36–37.

unbearable. Sometimes it seemed like my mind and body were going crazy with craving, but I kept praying harder and harder. I went through the motions of my work and did anything to try and get my mind off tobacco. By early evening, I was living from minute to minute as my whole body cried out for a cigarette all the time my whole mind and heart were crying out in prayer. I thought again and again about Ashley and the temple marriage I wanted more than anything. The evening wore on, and pain filled my entire body. When the midnight hours came, I still hadn't smoked, but it seemed all I could do was pray for help. Then in the early-morning hours, I became aware that the hunger for a cigarette was no longer there. And I was so thankful for Heavenly Father's help.”

For Parker, the desire to be sealed eternally in the temple to Ashley kept him focused on one goal and served as unwavering motivation for him to bear the initial pain and cravings that came to him. Prayer sustained his spirit as he struggled to override the physical withdrawal. As subsequent cravings came, he successfully overcame them, though he admits they were not as severe as the craving following his last cigarette. He and Ashley were recently sealed in the temple for time and all eternity.

In Ether 12:27 the Lord promises: “If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. . . . My grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; . . . I make weak things become strong unto them.”

“I KNEW IT WAS RIGHT”

Converts often experience a mighty change of heart that provides for them a strong motivation to change. “When you receive a spiritual witness that the gospel is true, you can't turn your back on it,” says Carolyn, who had been smoking two packs a day for most of the eight years she smoked. “I knew I wanted to be baptized. I had had the missionary discussions once before and knew when the missionaries challenged me to obey the Word of Wisdom, I would say *yes*. During that missionary discussion, I smoked one cigarette after another knowing they would be my last. I don't know how the missionary had the courage to ask me if I would accept the challenge to obey the

Word of Wisdom as I sat there smoking, but he did. He was shocked when I said *yes*. We walked together outside to my trash can, where I threw away all of my unsmoked cigarettes.”

Professional and medical treatment were not readily available when Carolyn quit. “I need help,” she said to her friend Laura. Knowing that fast Sunday was coming up, Laura said, “Let me talk with a few people close to you, and we will fast with you.” Carolyn agreed. On fast Sunday, she drew strength from the knowledge that so many were fasting with her and giving their support. It was enough to keep her motivated and focused on her commitment.

That was 30 years ago—many years before stop-smoking help and medications were available. Carolyn became one of the few of every 100 who are successful at quitting cold turkey. Though her addiction was severe and her crav-

ings powerful, she kept her resolve strong by continually drawing upon the fact that she knew the gospel was true. Her desire to be baptized and attend the temple led the way for her.



The desire to be baptized and live the gospel can be a powerful motivation for giving up tobacco.

In 1 Corinthians 10:13 we find courage to trust in the Lord to “make a way to escape, that [we] may be able to bear it.” Smokers who humbly ask the Lord to bless them one day at a time and strive to apply the principles of smoking cessation will be more likely to succeed. □

Gordon B. Lindsay is a member of the Heatheridge Third Ward, Orem Utah Heatheridge Stake.

A Reason to

SMILE

There are many problems in the world today, but there are also so many blessings for which we should be grateful.



BY ELDER JOE J.
CHRISTENSEN
Of the Seventy

If you were asked to smile, some of you would immediately smile very naturally and normally. It's something you do regularly. Some of you would just barely turn up the corners of your mouth to fulfill the assignment. And there would probably be a few of you who wouldn't smile at all.

Ask yourself, *Am I really a happy person?* If you are not and if it is difficult for you to smile, then think about it. Some of it may come from recognizing that difficulties are part of life. There are ups and downs. That fact reminds me of a story shared by Elder Marion D. Hanks, an emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy:

"A father [is] aboard an airplane on a short business trip. He has with him his five-year-old son and is almost wishing his son were not there because it is a very rough trip. There are downdrafts and updrafts and head winds alternating with tailwinds, and some passengers are feeling a bit queasy. Apprehensively, the father glances at his son and finds him grinning from ear to ear. 'Dad,' he says, 'do they do this just to make it fun for the kids?'" ("Changing Channels," *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 38).

How many times in the scriptures does the Lord command us to "be of good cheer" or "lift up your heart and rejoice" and "be exceedingly glad"? We should remember that happiness is a *commandment* and not merely a *suggestion* (see D&C 78:17–19; 31:3; 127:3).


This is a marvelous time in the history of the world to be alive. It is true—there are many problems, but there are so many blessings for which we should be grateful.

In the affluence enjoyed by some families, it is possible to lose perspective relative to others less fortunate. May I suggest we think and pray about those who are deprived of that which we often take for granted?

Besides appreciating the temporal blessings we may enjoy, to be appropriately grateful we need to develop a full appreciation for having the privilege of being members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—of having the light of the gospel come into our minds, spirits, and hearts. That makes life even more meaningful.

Of course there are times in our lives when things are so overwhelming that it is challenging to feel gratitude. We all face difficulties at some time or another, and occasionally they are tough. But in every case, you probably find out later there was something the Lord was teaching you, something that is or will be of immense importance in your life.

I think of Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and some of the challenges he



faced during his teenage years. His parents were very poor. It was embarrassing to him that early on they did not have indoor bathroom facilities like so many of his friends. He raised pigs, and that didn't gain him a lot of popularity at high school either. He suffered from severe acne that challenged his confidence and sense of self-worth. He wondered if he would ever be socially acceptable to others.

He was intensely interested in athletics—particularly basketball—and was good enough to be able to play on the team as a freshman. But in later years, he was cut from the team and the sport he loved. Consequently, as he described it, “I turned to the world of words.” That became an immense blessing for him in his political, university, and educational assignments and to all of us—he now serves as one of the Lord’s prophets, seers, and revelators.

If right now or at any time in your life you are feeling down, discouraged, depressed—for whatever reasons—here is a very practical suggestion: Take a sheet of blank paper and write on it at random those things for which you are most grateful. Write whatever your most important blessings are in whatever order they come to your mind.

After writing the list, on another sheet of paper put those blessings in order of priority. What is your most important blessing? The second most? And so on.

On my list, I had to go down a long way before I

came to any blessing that could be bought for money. Our most important blessings are without price. Blessings such as faith, testimony, and family are the kinds of blessings in defense of which, if necessary, we would be willing to give our mortal life.

Of course, chief among all the gifts for which we should be thankful is our Heavenly Father’s gift to us of His Son. As we read in scripture, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). The Doctrine and Covenants teaches us that “Jesus Christ your Redeemer . . . so loved the world that he gave his own life, that as many as would believe might become the sons of God” (D&C 34:1, 3).

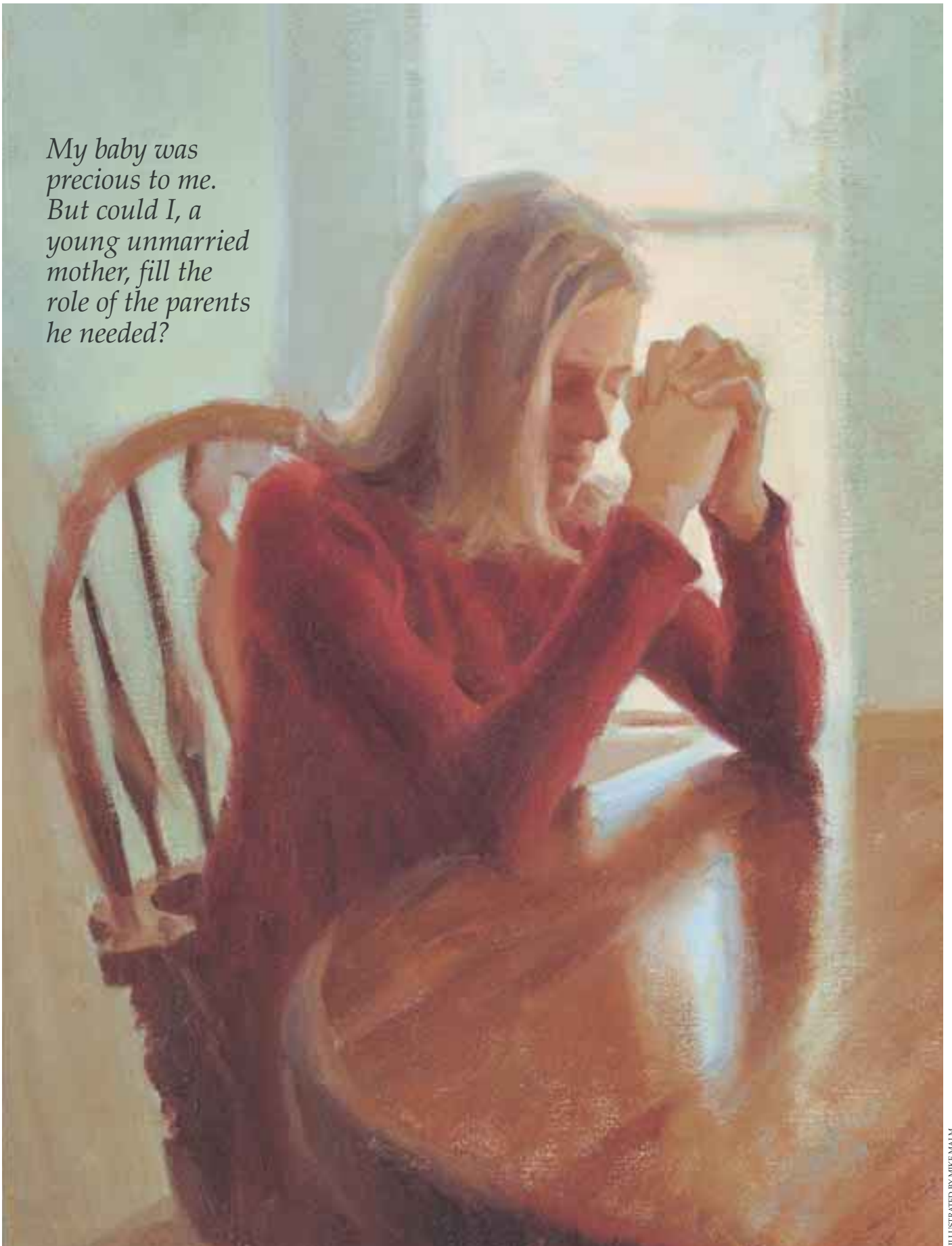
Father gave. Jesus gave. And we must give. There is no other blessing for which we should be more grateful than that of being recipients of the blessings that come through the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Add all of these blessings to your list. Then, on those days when you may not feel like smiling, take out your list and read it and recognize how blessed you are. You will find it easy to smile and to be of good cheer. You will also find it easier to be grateful. □

Elder Joe J. Christensen served as a member of the Seventy from 1989 to 1999.

Gospel topics: attitude, blessings, happiness, gratitude

*My baby was
precious to me.
But could I, a
young unmarried
mother, fill the
role of the parents
he needed?*



From the time I was small, my parents had emphasized the importance of keeping myself morally clean. I always believed these teachings, and for most of my life I conducted myself accordingly. But later, as a teenager, I slowly came to ignore what I had been taught. I didn't allow myself to think of the consequences of my behavior until the day I found out I was pregnant. I don't know why I was shocked, but I was. Teen pregnancy was something that happened to other people—not to me!

It was then that I realized how far I had strayed from the gospel path. I knew I had to change, especially for the sake of my child, but change seemed nearly impossible. I didn't know what to do.

After much counsel and support from my family, and most of all through prayer, I finally decided I was going to attempt what had seemed impossible. With the Lord's help, I was going to turn my life around and live according to the standards I had been taught.

I began attending church every week. The bishop was very understanding and helped me through the repentance process. He supported me in the difficult decisions I faced, ensuring that he was always available when I needed him.

The questions I had were many: How was I going to pay to have the baby? What would I do to provide for both of us? How could I give this child all he needed when I was still just a child myself? Abortion was out of the question, and I had not given adoption a second thought.

Kirk, my boyfriend, had wanted to get married, yet we now had extremely different goals. I wanted a temple marriage; Kirk didn't understand why the gospel was suddenly so important to me. Through prayer I knew I shouldn't marry him; that would only ruin his life, my life, and especially the life of our child. Somehow I gathered the strength to end our relationship.

Despite the support I was given, I was scared and unsure about my future. One day I talked to my sister about my situation. She could sense my confusion, and she told me something that changed my perspective. Her humbling words were: "Children have the right to be born to parents who can provide love,

shelter, and food. But most of all, they have the right to a mother *and a father* to love them. A basic eternal family unit is a child's right. But you need to pray to know what you should do."

I knew I could give this child shelter, food, and love; I could give this child a mother—but not a father. I knew that no amount of love, no matter how great,

can completely fill the void of a good father figure in a child's life. But most of all, I knew I couldn't take this child to the temple to be sealed to me. Would what I had to offer be enough for my baby?

I had to seek greater wisdom than mine, so I prayed and prayed and prayed. The answer didn't come loudly, and no voice spoke to me, but the feeling I received was unmistakable. It was a feeling of knowing, of comfort, and of peace. I knew that adoption was the correct decision for me. Placing my child for adoption would be hard, but I was willing to go

through anything necessary to give him an eternal family. I had faith that the Lord would help make it possible.

When I told Kirk of my decision, he fought it at first while admitting he could not provide for a child. Eventually he agreed that it was the best thing for our baby.

Shortly after I made my decision, I realized I had another great task ahead of me. I felt in my heart that there was a special couple somewhere out there who would welcome my child into their eternal family. I pleaded with Heavenly Father to help me in the search.

When I was told about Michael and Jennifer, I immediately felt great love for them. I felt a strong spiritual confirmation that they would be the kind of parents I had been looking for. I was happy for them but at the same time a little sad. Finding my baby's adoptive parents made the reality of adoption hit home. I never doubted whether I was doing the right thing, but I gradually realized how difficult it was going to be to say good-bye to my baby.

At times it felt as though the forces of the adversary were working overtime to prevent the adoption from taking place. It seemed the last thing Satan wanted was for another child to be sealed to a family



NAME WITHHELD

in the temple. But the harder Satan worked, the harder I tried to grow close to the Lord, and the closer I grew to the Lord, the stronger I became.

As my delivery date drew closer, I tried to prepare myself mentally and emotionally for what I was going to have to do. I had grown to love this baby so much! Through repentance and through turning to the Lord, I had seen a trial become the most precious gift I would ever be able to give: the gift of a child to a childless family.

The day finally came, a day I shall never forget for the rest of my life. Austin, the strong-spirited child I had carried for nine months, was ready to come into the world.

Within a couple of hours, he was suddenly in my arms. I looked at him through my tears. He was perfect! His noble spirit quickly filled the room. My family, along with the nurses, stood there with tears in their eyes. These weren't tears of sadness but tears of love.

I spent a short time with Austin, expressing my love for him. He gazed at me with his large, dark eyes. I'll never forget how he looked at me.

Through the comforting strength of the Spirit of the Lord, I was able to entrust my baby to a couple who had been waiting and praying for him.

The time for parting came the next day. It was so hard to see my baby go, but through the comforting strength of the Spirit of the Lord, I found the courage and strength to entrust my child to a couple who had waited and prayed for him for such a long time.

I learned that the impossible is in fact possible if one turns to the Lord for help. I had done what our Father in Heaven wanted me to do. I was so grateful for Austin; his strong spirit helped me through many long months. I helped give him life, but he helped give me a second chance at life.

It has now been two years since I gave birth to Austin. I was recently married in the temple to a wonderful man. My joy is ever increasing. When it is our time, we too will have a family of our own. We hope to experience the same joy Michael and Jennifer must have felt when they received Austin as a gift from God. □

Gospel topics: adoption, family, love, sacrifice

More on this topic: See Monte J. Brough, "Guidance for Unwed Parents," Ensign, Sept. 1994, 18–23; Name Withheld, "But What Was Best for the Baby?" Ensign, July 1999, 62–63; Name Withheld, "My Decision," Ensign, Aug. 1991, 28–29.

Visit www.lds.org or see Church magazines on CD.



ADOPTION AND THE UNWED MOTHER

BY LDS FAMILY SERVICES

In a letter dated 15 June 1998, the First Presidency reiterated instruction regarding unwed pregnancy given in earlier letters to bishops and stake presidents. This most recent letter states:

“Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by parents who provide love, support, and all the blessings of the gospel.

“Every effort should be made in helping those who conceive out of wedlock to establish an eternal family relationship. When the probability of a successful marriage is unlikely, unwed parents should be encouraged to place the child for adoption, preferably through LDS [Family] Services” (“Policies and Announcements,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1999, 80).

When the decision is made to place an infant for adoption, the infant is not the only one who benefits. Young women who choose adoption are more likely to complete high school and go on to higher education. They are more likely to be employed and less likely to live in poverty or receive public assistance. They are also less likely to repeat out-of-wedlock pregnancy (see Kristin A. Moore and others, *Adolescent Sex, Contraception, and Childbearing: A Review of Recent Research* [1995]; see also Steven D.

McLaughlin and others, “Do Adolescents Who Relinquish Their Children Fare Better or Worse Than Those Who Raise Them?” *Family Planning Perspectives*, Jan.–Feb. 1988, 25–32).

In most cases, teenage unwed fathers are absent from the lives of their children. One noted sociologist cites a number of studies that suggest children who grow up without their fathers are three times more likely to have a child out of wedlock, twice as likely to drop out of high school, and two to three times as likely to have emotional

or behavioral problems, and they often become the poorest of the poor (see David Popenoe, *Life without Father* [1996]).

Since the early 1920s the Church has offered counseling and help with adoptive placement to Latter-day Saint young women who become pregnant out of wedlock. Today there are 59 LDS Family Services offices throughout the United States and Canada, two offices in Australia, and offices in England, New Zealand, and Japan that provide these and a wide variety of other services.

LDS Family Services provides individual counseling to pregnant, unmarried young women to help them restore their hopes and plans for the future. Young women may also wish to participate in group meetings with others in similar situations and in counseling sessions with family members. Some birth mothers request assistance in arranging medical care and temporary housing during the pregnancy. They may also help select the adoptive couple for their baby. All of these services are provided at no cost, and a bishop’s referral is not required.

LDS Family Services also sponsors an Internet site and free crisis telephone service to women pregnant out of wedlock. Anyone may visit the Web site at www.itsaboutlove.org or

call 1-800-537-2229 for information or assistance. Volunteers are available by phone 24 hours a day year-round to answer questions and refer those who desire more information to the agency nearest them.

The decision to place an infant for adoption can be a wrenching one, yet it is an act of selflessness and profound love. The First Presidency letter affirms, “Placing the infant for adoption enables unwed parents to do what is best for the child and enhances the prospect for the blessings of the gospel in the lives of all concerned” (*Ensign*, Apr. 1999, 80). □

PARENTS TO NURTURE, PROTECT, AND LOVE



“Marriage is the more honorable thing. This means facing up to responsibility. It means giving the child a name, with parents who together can nurture, protect, and love.

“When marriage is not possible, experience has shown that adoption, difficult though this may be for the young mother, may afford a greater opportunity for the child to live a life of happiness. Wise and experienced professional counselors and prayerful bishops can assist in these circumstances.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Save the Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 53.



BY ELDER JAMES M. PARAMORE
Of the Seventy

When I was a young missionary serving in Paris, France, I had several opportunities to go to the top of the Eiffel Tower, 102 stories above the ground.

The tower was completed in 1889 as part of an international exposition. In the early days, several individuals fell to their death because the enclosure around the top floor was not high enough. Since those early days, a very high glass and wire enclosure has been installed, making it virtually impossible to fall. On a windy day, the top of the tower may sway as much as two feet. It is frightening to be there at such a time. Still, visitors are free to walk on the top-floor platform and look for miles or take pictures in any direction and yet always feel secure because of that enclosure. It protects them and gives them tremendous reassurance. Visitors are at peace knowing it is in place.

Like that enclosure, standards are boundaries that protect us from spiritual and often physical harm. Standards are everywhere. They are present in all aspects of our lives, from the moment



HOLD ON!

Standards are necessary for us to be safe, to grow, to develop, and to be happy.



we come to earth. They are necessary for us to be safe, to grow, to develop, and to be happy.

FREE TO CHOOSE

The spiritual body and the mind, like the physical body, are made up of what they feed upon. On a trip some years ago, my wife and I drank some water that we were unused to, and we were sick for several weeks. The mind is like that. It, too, is made up of what it feeds upon. The spirit is influenced by what the body and the mind feed upon.

Remember, the spiritual body of man is eternal. It lives on, hopefully receiving all the blessings promised those who use their agency in mortality to choose the standards established by our Father in Heaven.

Imagine the joy we felt when we learned that a beautiful earth had been created for us to come to. And imagine our satisfaction in learning that we would not be left without some standards or boundaries by which we could feel secure and protected, standards given by our Father in Heaven. He would not leave us without this great protection, though giving us our freedom to accept or reject it. He would offer us His ways, His standards, His boundaries, His inspiration, and His direction and then let us exercise our agency to accept or reject them. He would make it clear in His standards that they are eternal, never changing, reliable, and true safeguards, just like that enclosure on the Eiffel Tower.

If we stay within the boundaries prescribed, we will be safe, even at peace. Yet, even so, we

are not compelled to follow them. We have our agency, for we are told by an ancient prophet, Jacob, “Ye are free to act for yourselves—to choose the way of everlasting death or the way of eternal life” (2 Ne. 10:23).

AMAZING TECHNOLOGY

Now, all of this brings me to an important point. Today’s technological world is made up of the most remarkable advances ever known. They can enhance knowledge, understanding, and progress. But they can also open the floodgates to unsavory entertainment in the form of videos, music, or other things that influence what we think and what our minds feed upon. Ultimately it will influence our eternal spiritual selves, all in the privacy of our own homes. Will it strengthen our standards—or weaken them?

These advances provide a thorough test of our agency. Will we choose the standards of the Church and live by them, even when no one will know if we do or not? If we can keep the standards of the Lord now, it will become easier for us to do it always.

A CLEAR STANDARD

The First Presidency has given us strong media standards:

“Do not attend, view, or participate in entertainment that is vulgar, immoral, violent, or pornographic in any way. Do not participate in entertainment that in any way presents immorality or violent behavior as acceptable.

“Pornography in all its forms is especially dangerous and addictive. What may begin as a curious indulgence can become a destructive habit that takes control of your life. It can lead you to sexual transgression and even criminal behavior. Pornography is a poison that weakens your self-control, changes the way you see others, causes you to lose the guidance of the Spirit, and can even affect your ability to have a normal relationship with your future spouse. If you encounter pornography, turn away from it immediately.

“Depictions of violence often glamorize vicious behavior. They offend the Spirit and make you less able to respond to others in a sensitive, caring way. They contradict the Savior’s message of love for one another” (*For the Strength of Youth* [2001], 14–15).

The Lord’s standards and boundaries, if followed, are for our salvation, our joy, and our peace. They are our key to really know our Father in Heaven and the Savior, for He is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). So let us learn of His standards and boundaries and keep them so as to “come unto the Lord, the Holy One.” □

Elder James M. Paramore served as a member of the Seventy from 1977 to 1998.

Gospel topics: standards, obedience, moral purity

Using My Life's Lessons

One day while reading through the journals I kept through my college and newlywed years, I discovered that I had forgotten many important experiences, gospel insights, and answers to prayer I had received at that time in my life. As I read and relived those moments in time, I decided I didn't want to lay them on the shelf to be forgotten again. I wanted a way to resource my own personal experiences so I could use them as a device in any teaching opportunity I might have. I decided to go through my journals and write a brief description in the margins of what each entry contained. For example, next to an entry containing my reflections on a book about faith, I wrote "thoughts on faith." Now when I prepare a lesson or talk on faith, I can easily find this entry and recall my personal experiences and insights. Doing this helped prepare my journal as a future reference tool.

To make it easier for me to access all my ongoing experiences, I now jot down a summary in the margin after I finish writing in my journal.—**Jennifer Pearson Cloward, Cedar Hills Fourth Ward, Pleasant Grove Utah Manila Stake**



ILLUSTRATED BY JOE FLORES

Welcoming Young Women to Relief Society

While serving in ward and stake Relief Society presidencies, my friends and I watched our own daughters struggle with the transition from Young Women to Relief Society. Some adjusted more easily than others, but the change was not smooth or easy for any of them. To help our young women feel more accepting of Relief Society, our two stakes joined in planning an afternoon program to welcome them.

First, each ward sent invitations to girls who were 18 years old or in their senior year of high

school. Each invitation was personally addressed, inviting the young woman and her mother to attend a Sunday afternoon program.

At the program, we welcomed everyone and shared a brief history of Relief Society and explained its purpose. Since many of the young women would be heading off to college or pursuing other education soon, we invited a sister from a college ward Relief Society presidency to tell about Relief Society at her campus ward.

We also invited young adults from the Institute Women's Association to testify of the blessings of having Relief Society in their lives. They were local young adults whom our young women knew, so they also told about their involvement in the association. They invited the young women to call them and to visit their schools.

At the end of the program, the Relief Society presidents presented each young woman from her ward with a Relief Society manual and extended a personal invitation to attend Relief Society.

Since the outline for this program is adaptable, adjustments can be made easily. No matter where we live, it is important that we welcome young women to Relief Society. Mary Ellen W. Smoot, Relief Society general president, has said, "It will be within this loving sisterhood that young women enlarge their understanding of gospel principles [and] build firm testimonies" (comments at Relief Society open house, spring 1999 [*Ensign*, Mar. 2000, 71]). We enjoyed planning these programs with others and feel that we helped the girls better understand Relief Society and what it offers young women.—**Mary Lou Harward, Rainbow Crest Ward, Las Vegas Nevada Tule Springs Stake**



Family Home Evenings for Tots

I have fond memories of the family home evenings my parents held when I was a child. We had lessons from the family home evening manual, played memorable games, and enjoyed treats. I always felt having family home evening would be the same for my own family someday. But when I became a mother I realized family home evenings would have to be adjusted to hold my young children's interests. In teaching my little ones, I have learned the following:

1. *Simplify the lessons, treats, and activities.* Preparation can be fast and easy. For a quick lesson, I often use a picture from the Gospel Art Picture Kit (item no. 34730; U.S. \$25.00) and tell the story on the back of the picture. For small children, summarize the story in a few short sentences. Keep in mind that a few minutes of sitting still are long enough for most young children. After our lesson, we serve treats that we reserve for family night. For simple activities we do things such as finger plays and action songs. The *Children's Songbook* (35395; \$10.00) is a useful resource, and many books in public libraries offer good activity ideas.

2. *Use Church curriculum materials.* The *Family Home Evening Resource Book* (31106; \$5.00) includes tips for adapting the lessons for younger children. Church magazines offer articles and activities that would make good lessons.

Some carry a family home evening logo (see above left) to indicate that they are especially useful for family home evening. The "Friend to Friend" section in the *Friend* magazine features a Church leader each month. These articles often relate personable stories that children can relate to. Church audiovisual materials are also available through distribution centers or your meetinghouse library.

3. *Invite the Spirit of the Lord.* During the opening prayer, we invite the Spirit. At the conclusion of our lesson, we bear testimony of the truthfulness of

what we have taught. Then, as we feel the Spirit, we ask the children what they are feeling and help them identify those feelings.

4. *Make family home evening a habit.* It can be tempting to postpone family night when your family's schedule is busy and it's difficult to gather everyone together. Occasionally my husband is out of town on Monday night for business, and we forget to hold family home evening on Sunday before he leaves. When this happens, I have found it is better to go ahead with family night on Monday than not have it at all. But whenever possible, we include the whole family in an activity once a week, even if it is not Monday night.

The First Presidency has said: "We call upon parents to devote their best efforts to teaching and rearing of their children in gospel principles.

... We counsel parents and children to give *highest priority* to ... family home evening" ("Letter from the First Presidency," *Liahona*, Dec. 1999, 1; emphasis in original).

Though it can be a challenge to hold regular family home evenings with young children, our family has been blessed for heeding the First Presidency's counsel to spend time together studying the gospel and having fun.

—Celestia Shumway,
Edgemont Sixth
Ward, Provo Utah
Edgemont Stake



Go to Work Now!

By Nancy G. Love

When the alarm clock went off at one o'clock on a cold Monday morning in January, Bart Love hit the snooze button. His work shift didn't start for three hours, but he planned to go in early, as he often did, to do paperwork. But now, in his warm, comfortable bed, he thought he would wait just a while longer before getting up. Then a strong feeling came over him that he should get up and go to work *now*. So by 1:30 he was on the road.

It was a foggy morning, and the icy roads were especially slick after a recent rainfall and freezing temperatures. Thinking how awful it would be to slide off the road in this kind of weather, Bart drove carefully, trying to keep track of his location just in case he did go off the road.

As he came upon a particularly icy portion of road that went over a bridge, he noticed some lights off to the right. Looking more closely, he realized he was seeing the taillights of someone's car sticking up out of the water!

He pulled his truck as far off the side of the road as he dared and got out. After checking the depth of the freezing water with a stick, he walked waist deep to the vehicle and called out to anyone who might be there. A teenage girl's voice answered. She said she was trapped in the car. The car was upside down in the water, and she had managed to find about a five-inch air pocket in the backseat area. The windows were broken and the doors jammed. Bart tried but could not open a door to get her out. He told her he would quickly go to a nearby house to call for

help and then be right back.

After asking someone at the nearest home to phone for emergency help, he returned to the girl to wait with her in the freezing water. Unable to see her in the darkness, Bart held her hand

through the broken window and continued to talk to her, hoping to keep her calm and conscious. He avoided asking direct questions about what had happened or how long she had been there. She answered each of his



questions and continually thanked him for finding her.

When rescue units arrived to help the girl out of the car, Bart slipped away and returned home for a quick shower and dry clothes before heading off again

to work. He later learned that the paramedics who had responded to the emergency call said the girl's body temperature had been so low that she would not have survived another 20 minutes in the freezing water. As it was, she

walked away with no permanent damage to her body.

The girl and her parents were very grateful that Bart had found her when he did, and he was grateful that he had heeded the prompting not to delay but to go into work—*now*. □

Nancy G. Love is a member of the Weston First Ward, Preston Idaho South Stake.

Gospel topics: Holy Ghost, service



Bart walked to the vehicle and called out to anyone who might be inside. A teenage girl's voice answered.

My Friend "Milkshake"

By Robert Lee "Rocky" Crockrell

In February 1958, at age 17, I entered the U.S. Navy.

After boot camp I was sent aboard an aircraft carrier, where I met Raymond Bruce Covington, from Provo, Utah.

I thought Raymond was a bit strange—no smoking, no drinking, no cursing, no nothing. I asked him what he did for enjoyment. He said he did a lot of things, but mostly what he enjoyed was either starting or ending his day with one or two big milk shakes. So Raymond was given the nickname "Milkshake."

After the lights went out at night, Raymond would tell me about his church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I was really quite interested until he told me that if I joined his church, I could not hold the priesthood. That did not go over well with me. Seeing my agitation, Raymond expressed his feeling that perhaps one day the priesthood would be available to me.

As time went by I began to favor Raymond above all my friends because of the way he carried himself. After a while I found



I had ceased to live the kind of life I had been living, and I wanted to do the right thing. He made me realize I didn't have to curse or drink alcohol to be "cool." I could make the choice to live a righteous life.

One day several of the guys were sitting on the deck gambling. One of them looked up at Raymond and said, "Milkshake! Say this curse word and you can have all the money in the pot!"

I quickly counted the money and found the total to be \$240. That was two months' pay! I figured that since he and I were buddies, he would give me half. But to my dismay, Raymond would not curse. I pleaded with him, but he said, "No way!" He didn't believe in that kind of talk.

What a guy he was! I knew then that to be a true Latter-day Saint was a sacred thing.

One of the gamblers looked up at Raymond and said, "Curse and you can have all the money in the pot!"

Raymond was discharged in June 1961, and I was discharged in October that year. I got married soon after and eventually became a merchant seaman. I sailed all over the world, often wondering whatever happened to my old navy friend.

One day many years later, in 1990, while looking out the window of my home in Washington state, I spotted two nicely dressed young men. They were missionaries for the Church, and I invited them in. After talking with them a little while, I found out that Raymond's hopes had come true: a revelation had been received in 1978 directing that all worthy males could receive the priesthood. I was elated. After receiving the missionary lessons, a date was set for my baptism.

About this time I told a neighbor, also a member of the Church, about my friendship with Raymond Covington. I had no idea the neighbor would go to Utah and actually find Raymond. Two weeks later my old friend drove more than 1,000 miles to Gig Harbor, Washington, to speak at my baptism. He said he always knew that someday I would join the Church.

We both knew that many miles and many years could not separate two real friends and now brothers in the gospel.

In December 1997, I got a call from Raymond's daughter telling me he had passed away. I was saddened by the news, but I smile now when I think of the reunion two sailor boys, Rocky and his friend Milkshake, will someday have on the other side of the veil. □

Robert Lee "Rocky" Crockrell is a member of the Wollochet Ward, Tacoma Washington Stake.

Gospel topics: example, friendship, missionary work, priesthood

Help from the Other Side

By Val Farmer

One day in 1903, my grandfather Conrad Trost stopped to listen to two Latter-day Saint missionaries preach the gospel on an Australian street corner. He joined the Church, and since that time there have been many active members in my family. Out of gratitude for what Grandfather Trost did for us, I had a burning desire to seek after his ancestors so that the temple work might be done for them.

Before my mother died, I asked her several times, "Mum, when you return home to the other side, will you tell your family we need help down here to do their work?" A few months after she passed away, several interesting events opened the Trost line to temple work.

In January 1988, my cousin Elva (whose maiden name is Trost) and her husband, Bruce Mitchell, went to Germany on business. My great-grandfather Justus David Trost had come to Australia in 1863 from the German village of Frankenberg, and Elva said that during their trip they would go to the village to find out what they could about the family line. Though we already had some information, our research had seemed to come up against a closed door. I prayed that a door of opportunity would open for Elva and Bruce.

Upon reaching the village they checked the phone book, and there were several Trosts, but because neither Elva nor Bruce spoke German, they decided to visit the families in person.

Searching out addresses in the little village, they became lost. When Bruce stopped the car to ask for directions, Elva happened to look up at an old nearby hotel with a sign that read "Trost Proprietor."

Elva and Bruce used gestures to help them communicate with a woman at the front desk. Becoming excited, she called to a man and spoke to him, and in due course he beckoned Elva and Bruce to follow him down an old cobblestone street to a little house. A woman named Elizabeth, who spoke broken English, invited them in.

Elizabeth's maiden name was also Trost, and she produced for Elva and Bruce the Trost family history dating back to 1587. She told them of an American family who were members of the Church and who had visited several years before also searching for their Trost ancestors. A door had opened wide on my family history.

I began corresponding with both Elizabeth and that American branch of the Trost family. The Americans were as delighted to know about their Australian relatives as I was to discover them. Elizabeth was a great help searching out other family records in old churches in Germany.

I marvel to think how so many "coincidences" could happen at just the right time, and I have come to believe that we had help from the other side of the veil. This trip brought my family history to a place where we could submit centuries of our family generations to the temple so that our ancestors could receive their own ordinances, changing the lives of many Saints, living and dead. □

Val Farmer is a member of the Redcliffe Ward, Brisbane Australia North Stake.

Gospel topics: family history, temple work

Living as Women of Virtue

Read the following with the sisters you visit, and discuss the questions, scriptures, and teachings from our Church leaders. Share your experiences and testimony, and invite those you teach to do the same.

Proverbs 31:10: “Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.”

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency: “Virtue has many definitions, such as moral excellence, right action and thinking, goodness of character, or chastity” (“How Near to the Angels,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 95).

WHAT VIRTUES ARE IMPORTANT FOR US TO CULTIVATE?

Philippians 4:8: “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “I feel to invite women everywhere to rise to the great potential within you. I do not ask that you reach beyond your capacity. I hope you will not nag

yourselves with thoughts of failure. . . . I hope you will simply do what you can do in the best way you know. If you do so, you will witness miracles come to pass” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 696).

Margaret D. Nadauld, Young Women General President: “The world has enough women who are tough; we need women who are tender. There are enough women who are coarse; we need women who are kind. There are enough women who are rude; we need women who are refined. We have enough women of fame and fortune; we need more women of faith. We have enough greed; we need more goodness. We have enough vanity; we need more virtue. We have enough popularity; we need more purity” (“The Joy of Womanhood,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 15).

“We cannot expect to lift others unless we stand on higher ground ourselves.”

HOW CAN WE BEST TEACH THESE VIRTUES?

D&C 46:33: “Ye must practice virtue and holiness before me continually.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “We cannot hope to influence others in the direction of virtue unless we live lives of virtue. The example of our living will carry a greater influence than will all the preaching in which we might indulge. We cannot expect to lift others unless we stand on higher ground ourselves. . . . The home is the cradle of virtue, the place where character is formed and habits are established” (“Opposing Evil,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, 38–39).

WHAT ARE THE PROMISED BLESSINGS OF LIVING A LIFE OF VIRTUE?

D&C 121:45: “Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God.”

D&C 25:2: “If thou art faithful and walk in the paths of virtue before me, I will preserve thy life, and thou shalt receive an inheritance in Zion.”

President James E. Faust: “The Prophet Joseph Smith . . . said, ‘If you live up to your privileges, the angels cannot be restrained from being your associates.’ . . . Hold your soul very still, and listen to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. Follow the noble, intuitive feelings planted deep within your souls by Deity in the previous world” (*Ensign*, May 1998, 97). □



ILLUSTRATED BY JULIE ANN ALLEN



PHOTO BY ROD TONDEVOLD

Milton Derry, Eric Slocombe, and Blaine Jensen were more than surprised when they were called as the presidency of the Saskatoon stake.

Saints in Saskatchewan, Canada

The treeless 252,000-square-mile province of Saskatchewan, located in central Canada, has been called by some “the forgotten place on the Canadian prairie.” Latter-day Saints in Saskatchewan feel anything but forgotten, however, as unexpected spiritual blessings have come their way in recent years.

The latest unexpected blessing came in October of last year. At the fall stake conference, a new stake was to be created—the Regina stake. The Saskatoon stake, which had been the only stake in Saskatchewan since its creation 24 years earlier, was to be changed to the Saskatoon district, in spite of members’ best activation and missionary efforts. The Saskatoon stake members were disappointed, but “we all were prepared to return to district status, accepting this as the will of the Lord,” said Eric Slocombe of the Saskatoon Second Ward.

Then Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles came

to preside at a special stake conference on 27–28 October. During the Saturday session of conference in Regina, Elder Nelson created the Regina Saskatchewan Stake, as planned.

On the morning of the Sunday session of conference in Saskatoon, as Elder Nelson was conducting interviews prior to selecting the new president for the Saskatoon district, he excused himself in order to pray in private. Upon returning, Elder Nelson proceeded with the interviews and selected a new president. During the conference session, Elder Nelson surprised everyone when

he announced not a new *district* president but a new *stake* president for the Saskatoon Saskatchewan Stake.

“There was no oxygen left in the room because everyone in the audience gasped when they realized that a district was not being created but that they still had their stake. Then the tears came,” said Milton Derry, first counselor to Brother Slocombe, who was called as the new Saskatoon stake president.

An earlier unexpected blessing for members in Saskatchewan came in August 1998, when President Gordon B. Hinckley visited Regina, Saskatchewan’s capital city, to speak to local members. As President Hinckley directed his remarks toward temple building, members listened eagerly, knowing the Church President was announcing the construction of many new temples at that time.

They were hoping, recalls Joanne Thomson of the Regina First Ward, that President Hinckley would announce a temple for Winnipeg, Manitoba, a likely city for a temple because many Latter-day

Saints and the Canada Winnipeg Mission headquarters are located there. Winnipeg is 357 miles (571 km) from Regina, but that would still be closer than the 434 miles (700 km) Regina members were accustomed to traveling to the Cardston Alberta Temple.

When President Hinckley announced that

SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>First baptism:</i> | 1913 |
| <i>Today’s members:</i> | Nearly 5,000 |
| <i>Units:</i> | 2 stakes, 8 wards, 10 branches |
| <i>Temple:</i> | Regina Saskatchewan |



a temple would be built in Regina, “there was a huge collective gasp, and then the tears started,” said Sister Thomson. “No one ever suspected a temple would be built in Regina, here in the middle of nowhere.”

The Regina Saskatchewan Temple was dedicated on 14 November 1999.

Today, the nearly 5,000 members living in Saskatchewan are doing all they can to be worthy of their temple and their two stakes—working together in missionary efforts, supporting each other, and performing family history and temple work.—Janet Kruckenberg, Wahpeton Branch, Fargo North Dakota Stake □



PHOTO BY JANET KRUCKENBERG

The Regina Saskatchewan Temple



PHOTO BY JASON SWENSEN, CHURCH NEWS

The Columbia River temple will serve some 35,000 members in southeast Washington and northeast Oregon.

Columbia River Washington Temple Dedicated

President Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated the Columbia River Washington Temple, located in Richland, Washington, in four dedicatory sessions on 18 November 2001.

"Thy grateful people have erected this house. It has been visited by many thousands. They have come out of curiosity and have left with appreciation. May their hearts be inclined to Thy work and may there grow within them a desire to learn of Thy revealed truth," President Hinckley said in the dedicatory prayer.

"... We pray that Thou wilt smile upon Thy people and their families. Open the windows of heaven

and shower down blessings upon the faithful who contribute of their time and resources according to Thy will and law. May the whole earth become as Zion as Thy work spreads among the nations.

"Bless our own land in these perilous times. Bless those who serve as trustees of this government formed under an inspired Constitution, the principles of which have come from Thee. May peace replace conflict, we implore Thee."

Accompanying President Hinckley were Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Seventy, President of the

North America Northwest Area.

The Columbia River Washington Temple serves more than 34,000 Latter-day Saints in southeast

Washington and northeast Oregon, nearly 15,000 of whom attended the dedication. Before the Columbia River temple was dedicated, these members had to travel to temples in Seattle, Washington; Spokane, Washington; or Portland, Oregon.

Nearly 65,000 people came to the temple's open house, which began on 27 October and continued through 10 November, except Sundays. As President Hinckley petitioned in his dedicatory prayer, many of these visitors asked to learn more about the gospel; within a few weeks of the open house, the Washington Spokane Mission reported that more than 20 open house visitors had joined the Church and many more were investigating.

"The temple has been accepted very well in the community," said Allan D. Alder, temple president. "And the Church members are so thankful. The tears just run because they're so appreciative to have a temple this close to them." □

First Presidency Hosts Annual Christmas Devotional

"What a glorious thing it is that, at least at this time of year, hearts of men and women across the world turn in adoration to the Son of God," President Gordon B. Hinckley said to the audience assembled in the Conference Center and in stake centers on 2 December for the annual

First Presidency Christmas Devotional.

Joined by his counselors in the First Presidency—President Thomas S. Monson and President James E. Faust—President Hinckley bore testimony of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

"Through Him has

come—and now comes again—the wondrous glory of His plan of salvation and exaltation. He is the Lord Omnipotent, Son of the Almighty, who lives and reigns to guide this work,” said President Hinckley.

“Now the world is at war. Our very civilization is in peril. But above and beyond all of the conflict, all of the quarreling, all of the sound and fury of battle, He is our refuge, our Rock of Ages, our source of peace, comfort, and certain assurance concerning the immortality of the human soul.

“Praise be to the Almighty and to His Only Begotten Son, the Redeemer of all mankind. Every one of us is better, our lives are richer, our faith is more certain because of Jesus Christ, the living Son of the living God, our Redeemer and our King, whose birth in Bethlehem of Judea we honor at this time.

“We are a little kinder, a little more thoughtful, a little more neighborly, much richer in spirit because of Him.”

President Hinckley asked that each of us do more to follow the Savior’s example of love and service.

“Our prayer at this wondrous season of Christmas is that we will look inward to test our own hearts and look outward for an opportunity to reach down and lift someone who is in need. It will not be difficult to find someone.

“Brothers and sisters, boys and girls, we can all be a little kinder, a little



PHOTO BY JOHN LUKE

“May each of you have some selfless, long-to-be-remembered experience in bringing blessings to others,” President Hinckley said during the devotional. Presidents Monson and Faust (seated) also spoke.

more patient, a little more helpful. We can all reach out to the very many who are in distress for any number of reasons. We can replace anger with love. We can put selfishness out of our lives. We can get on our knees and pray to the Father in the name of Jesus, and then stand on our feet and reach out to bless the destitute, the poor, the oppressed, and those in trouble. . . .

“May each of you have some selfless, long-to-be-remembered experience in bringing blessings to others.”

President Monson reflected on the challenges and blessings that exist in the world at this time. “Since last we met for the traditional Christmas devotional, much has happened in the world,” he said. “The September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, and the further threat of terrorism,

have obscured for now that hoped-for blessing of peace on earth.

“The price of freedom has ever been high. Our prayers go out to those whose families feel the absence of loved ones and who experience daily a concern for their well-being. We unite in an earnest prayer to our Father in Heaven that a pattern for peace may be found and that good will toward men may be our divinely bestowed blessing.”

President Monson added to President Hinckley’s petition that we recommit to living a Christlike life. “There is no better time than now, this very Christmas season, for all of us to rededicate ourselves to the principles taught by Jesus the Christ. It is the time to love the Lord, our God, with all our heart—and our neighbors as ourselves.”

President Faust spoke of the importance of Christmas traditions. “One reason that Christmas is so meaningful is because year after year we follow traditions that help us bond as families. . . . In keeping Christmas traditions, we bind ourselves to the past, present, and future.”

At the center of each of our Christmas traditions should be the life of Jesus Christ, said President Faust. “As we think of the happiness of Christmases past and the joy of this Christmas, may we savor and perpetuate the Christmas traditions which express our endearment and love to each other. The greatest tradition, of course, is also the very reason we celebrate Christmas. The ‘good tidings of great joy’ must ‘be to all people’ (see Luke 2:10). All of our individual traditions should point to this greatest of all traditions.” □



PHOTO BY TOM SMART, DESERET NEWS

President and Sister Hinckley greet Alan C. Ashton, grandson of President David O. McKay, at the dedication of a Weber State University education building named for President McKay.

President Hinckley's Remarks Honor President David O. McKay

Speaking in Ogden, Utah, at the dedication of a Weber State University education building named for President David O. McKay, President Gordon B. Hinckley honored the ninth President of the Church.

"It is appropriate now that we name this beautiful and serviceable structure the David O. McKay Education Building," said President Hinckley. "It does him honor. It rewards his love for this institution. It immortalizes his good name. It becomes an instant reminder to every student who attends this school of the importance of integrity, of the importance of honesty, of the importance of virtue, of the importance of work, of the importance of beauty."

President McKay possessed rare "physical and mental strength and energy, a love for young people and a great desire to see them make something of their lives, a robust appreciation for the humorous coupled with a stern sense of discipline, a dedication to learning, and an appreciation for hard work," President Hinckley said.

As a young man, David Oman McKay attended what was then called the Weber Academy. He later became principal there, where he taught religion and literature and raised funds to expand the school. He remained the principal for two years after he was called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1906. □

Elder Nelson Meets Ghanaian President, Breaks Temple Ground

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles met with the president of Ghana, John Agyekum Kufuor, on 16 November while in that country to preside at the long-awaited groundbreaking for the Accra Ghana Temple.

Elder Nelson told the Ghanaian president that the Church is engaged in helping its members become better people and better citizens, emphasizing the Church's interest in strengthening families. He also reviewed some of the humanitarian aid and community improvement projects that the Church has sponsored in Ghana over the past several years in its commitment to the betterment of people's lives.

President Kufuor invited the Church to contribute in any way that could benefit the country and noted, "The Church has come to stay and is part of this nation now."

Elder Nelson also visited Ghana to train local leaders. Three of them

accompanied him and Elder H. Bruce Stucki of the Seventy, President of the Africa West Area, during their visit to Ghana's president. They were Elder Emmanuel O. Opare, Area Authority Seventy; President Richard Kwesi Ahadjie of the Christiansborg Ghana Stake; and President Charles Sonokoree of the Lartebiokorshie Ghana Stake.

Elder Nelson, joined by Elder Stucki and Elder Opare, presided at the 16 November groundbreaking ceremony for the Ghana temple. Civil engineers have been preparing the site for construction since the temple was announced by President Gordon B. Hinckley on 16 February 1998.

At the ceremony, Elder Nelson addressed the hundreds of local members and their friends in attendance, as well as governmental leaders present, including the Honorable Alhaji Aliu Mahama, vice president of the Republic of Ghana. □



PHOTO BY NORMAN NOORDA

News cameras roll as Elder Nelson (fourth from right) and other priesthood leaders break ground in Accra for West Africa's first temple.



PHOTO BY DON SEARLE

This year's Christmas displays on Temple Square will continue through the 2002 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

Unique Displays Shine at Salt Lake, Washington D.C. Temples

Unique Christmas lighting and displays were in place this year at the Salt Lake and Washington D.C. Temples.

Since 1996 new adornments and lights have been added annually to enhance the spirit of Christmas on Salt Lake City's Temple Square, including the Church Office Building plaza and Conference Center block. The result is a breathtaking display that has drawn millions of visitors and led *USA Today* to name Temple Square as one of the nation's "ten great places to . . . reflect on Christmas."

This year's Christmas display in Salt Lake City will continue through the 2002 Olympic and Paralympic

Winter Games so that visitors from around the world can enjoy the beauty and spirit of the display.

New this year are two large-scale, folk art nativity scenes from Mexico and New Zealand. These new crèches are displayed along with others from Africa, Japan, Alaska, and



PHOTO BY R. COLE GOODWIN

Most of the Christmas lights at the Washington D.C. Temple Visitors' Center shone red, white, and blue in honor of the victims of the 11 September terrorist attacks in the United States.

Poland that were acquired last Christmas.

In addition, hundreds of new metal luminarias (lanterns lighted from within), laser-cut with 12 silhouette designs depicting scenes from the Savior's life, were added to the many metal and paper luminarias already on display from prior years.

These most recent additions complement the life-like nativity scene on Temple Square, thousands of flickering electronic candles floating in the reflecting pool east of the Salt Lake Temple, and hundreds of thousands of Christmas lights, all added in years past.

WASHINGTON D.C. TEMPLE

At the Washington D.C. Temple, most of this year's Christmas lights twinkled red, white, and blue in honor of the victims of the 11 September terrorist attacks in the United States. On 28 November, ambassadors from 35 nations honored the victims at a ceremony in which the temple's Christmas lights were turned on.

"Let us tonight dedicate each of the more than 300,000 lights to the memory of those who lost their lives," said Ambassador Guenter

Burghardt, head of the European Union delegation in Washington and co-host of the lighting ceremony.

The lights and a live nativity scene are a major attraction each year for hundreds of thousands of visitors.

Elder Sheldon F. Child of the Seventy, president of the North America East Area, also honored the victims of 11 September and said the lights represent Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.

"We reach out to all who lost family members and



PHOTO BY DON SEARLE

A large-scale crèche from New Zealand is one of many new displays on Temple Square.

loved ones on that never-to-be-forgotten day," he said. "Just as the thousands of lights . . . add to the peace and serenity of these beautiful grounds, so does the light of Christ add peace and serenity to our lives." □

Marjorie Pay Hinckley Celebrates 90th Birthday

Marjorie Pay Hinckley, wife of President Gordon B. Hinckley, celebrated her 90th birthday on 23 November 2001. Sister Hinckley was born in Nephi, Utah, in 1911, a descendant of Latter-day Saint pioneers.

Sister Hinckley says that for her, happiness has been the key to living a long and healthy life: "I think if you're happy you live longer."

Growing up together in the same neighborhood, President and Sister Hinckley knew each other from their youth. They were married in the Salt Lake Temple in April 1937. They have



PHOTO BY TOM SMART/DESERET NEWS

"I think if you're happy you live longer," said Sister Hinckley at 90, reflecting on her long life.

5 children, 25 grandchildren and 31 great-grandchildren.

Sister Hinckley celebrated her birthday at a family party and at a later reception with General

Authorities and their wives.

Sister Hinckley has been recognized a number of times for her accomplishments, receiving an honorary doctor of humane letters from Utah Valley State College in April 2001, an honorary doctoral degree in Christian service from BYU in 2000, and the Service to Humanity Award from the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists in 1998.

Traveling with her husband, Sister Hinckley has visited every continent and conversed with such dignitaries as the queen of Thailand and the prime minister of England. □

won third team all-America. The Ricks men's team won by a very close margin. Defending NJCAA champion Jeff Davidson finished sixth, Ryan Jenks seventh, and David Woodbury eighth, all three winning second team all-America honors.

J. B. Haglund, a senior at Haverford College in Haverford, Pennsylvania, won the NCAA division 3 cross-country championship. He is a five-time all-American in track and cross-country events.

University of Utah track competitor Teren Jameson won all-America honors for the second year in a row at the NCAA division 1 cross-country championship meet. He was also the Mountain West Conference's runner of the year.

Both the BYU and Ricks College football teams achieved recognition during their seasons.

BYU won the Mountain West Conference championship and played in the Liberty Bowl in Memphis, Tennessee, on New Year's Eve. Cougar Luke Staley, who received the Doak Walker award as the nation's top running back, was also named to the Associated Press all-America first team.

The Ricks College Viking football team had a 10-1 record for their season. They beat Lackawanna College in the Real Dairy Bowl in Pocatello, Idaho, the Vikings' last intercollegiate game, on 30 November. Viking tight end Jon Clark was named first team all-America by the NJCAA, and teammate Carl Tuitavuki was named second team all-America. □

Latter-day Saint Athletes Earn National Recognition

Latter-day Saint athletes earned national recognition in the United States on a number of competitive fronts late in 2001.

The women's cross-country team from Brigham Young University won the National Collegiate Athletic Association championship, taking the title for the third time in the past five years. Three BYU runners finished in the top 10: Michaela Manova, Jessie Kindschi, and Tara Northcutt. Lindsey Thomsen and Sarah Taylor finished 24th and 25th. The five women were within 30 seconds of each other at the finish, and each earned all-America honors.

Both the women's and men's cross-country teams

from Ricks College won the National Junior College Athletic Association titles in their final competitions. (Ricks College became Brigham Young University—Idaho at the beginning of the 2001–02 school year and will drop intercollegiate athletic competition at the end of the year. For the purposes of athletic competition, the school maintained the name of Ricks for this final season.)

For the Ricks women, it was the seventh NJCAA championship in a row, and for the Ricks men, their third consecutive title. Angela Benson finished first among the women, won the individual title in the meet, and received first team all-America status.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEWIS

All-American Angela Benson led her Ricks cross-country women's team to its seventh NJCAA title.

Lida Clapier, Kim Conover, Audrey Golightly, and Kathrine Anderson finished sixth, eighth, ninth, and tenth and won second team all-America status. Amy Conover finished 13th and

In the Spotlight

FIRST CZECH MEETINGHOUSE DEDICATED

The first Church meetinghouse to be built in the Czech Republic was dedicated in November and is now serving the 280 members of the Brno Branch. The building, dedicated by Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Seventy, First Counselor in the Europe Central Area Presidency, also houses the country's first Family History Center.

A two-day open house for the facility was held in October, hosted by Gád Vojkuvka, president of the Brno Czech District. President Vojkuvka recalled a time in the former Czechoslovakia when the mission was closed for many years and Church members could not openly live the gospel. His parents held meetings in their home once a month. Now he says he is grateful he and his family can attend church weekly in their own meetinghouse.

BRITISH MEMBER RECEIVES QUEEN'S HONOR

Brian Holliday of the Blackburn Ward, Preston England Stake, was recently recognized on the Queen's Birthday Honors List as a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE). He was invited to Buckingham Palace to receive the award for his services to people with disabilities.

Having disabilities himself, Brother Holliday, 53,

trains others with disabilities to work to their capacity. He also travels the country promoting the rights of disabled workers, and he is the governor of a state-run school for youngsters with disabilities.

ORGANIST HAS SERVED FOR 80 YEARS

When people enter the chapel of the Highland Ward, Ogden Utah East Stake, the music that greets them is played by an organist with 80 years' experience.

Ninety-two-year-old Vernal Johnson began playing for his ward's priesthood meetings at the age of 12. In high school, he studied organ with Edward P. Kimball, former Salt Lake Tabernacle organist. During his mission to Germany in 1928, he played for many German congregations. Later, while serving as a U.S. army officer in a medical battalion during World War II, he used his talents in playing at church services for various denominations on base.



PHOTO BY TERRY NELSON

Vernal Johnson

Today Brother Johnson continues to uplift his ward by performing an organ and piano duet with his son during a sacrament meeting each Christmas season, a tradition they've kept up for 30 years.



PHOTO BY KATHLEEN PEIFFER

Volunteers build a fence for a home as part of the Hillsboro stake's Humanitarian Day.

OREGON STAKE GIVES ANNUAL COMMUNITY SERVICE

Hundreds of men, women, and children recently participated in the sixth annual Humanitarian Day sponsored by the Hillsboro Oregon Stake. Joining stake members in giving community service were individuals from other denominations and organizations.

Volunteer service included making toys for homeless and orphaned children; cleaning a local clinic, shelter, Boys and Girls Club, and six schools; preparing lots for Habitat for Humanity; planting shrubs and grooming trails at a park; helping senior citizens with yard work; and collecting food and other items for a food bank and homeless shelter.

Comment

Timely Articles

Lately I have been devouring each issue of the *Ensign* to help me in the daily challenges of life. The articles are so timely. Who could have known what many Church members would need following the events of 11 September in the United States, but the *Ensign* was full of timely answers and important information.

Now I often incorporate the *Ensign* in my personal scripture study and have received inspiration as I refer to the scriptures cited in particular articles. My *Ensign* has truly become a tool of light and knowledge as I underline, highlight, and write in the margins. Mimi Murdock
Hurricane, Utah

Power through Hymns

I would like to thank Elder Merrill J. Bateman for his article "The Power of Hymns" (July 2001). I especially enjoyed the wonderful story he shared about how a young girl with severe physical disabilities was able to express her testimony through a hymn. Clare O'Neill
Port Stewart, Londonderry, Northern Ireland

A Great Teaching Help

I so enjoyed all the articles about the Doctrine and Covenants that ran in the *Ensign* in 2001. I love the information about our Church history. Each article seemed to give new insight into the early Church—what a great teaching help! Maxine Lund Breinholt
Salt Lake City, Utah

Beyond Prison Bars

I recently read the article "I Saw Beyond the Prison Bars" (July 2001). The story of the author's participation in a Church meeting in prison touched me because I am a Church member who is also an inmate.

I would like to thank all those who take the time to visit a prison to share their presence and spirit with those who desperately need to know that they can be forgiven, that people care for them, and that God loves them. I am grateful for the brethren that faithfully come to the prison where I am every Sunday to share a lesson. They have made such an impact on my life, and I appreciate them more than they will ever know. Their gift is one of the greatest I have ever received. Name Withheld

Making the Most of This Issue

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 0 2



says about how you might help a loved one quit, p. 50.

Our Testimony to Visitors: We Believe in Him

The exhibits and the technology in the remodeled visitors' centers on Temple Square are new, but they powerfully support a timeless message: We believe in Jesus Christ. For a visual tour of the exhibits, see p. 6.

Home Teachers and Visiting Teachers

Find the monthly messages on pp. 2 and 72.

Did You Know?

Did you know you're free to use all textual materials from the *Ensign* in teaching your family or in Church classes? Some pictures are copyrighted by the artists, so you would want to check with the Church's Copyrights and Permissions office (1-800-453-3860, ext. 2-3959) before copying them for distribution. But all materials in Church magazines are meant to help members in individual study and in teaching in the home or Church classes.

joyfully if we focus on solutions rather than problems," writes Mary Ellen W. Smoot, Relief Society general president. To learn her four suggestions for problem solving, see p. 42.

Find assistance for your study of Genesis 1-3 on p. 26.

Gifts of the Spirit

"The gifts of the Spirit can guide and enrich our lives," says Elder Robert D. Hales of



the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. How do we discover our individual gifts? See p. 12.

Beating Tobacco

Do you have a loved one who smokes? Did you know that nicotine is as addictive as heroin? See what a Latter-day Saint expert on the difficulty of giving up tobacco

Old Testament Principles to Help You

Freeing the children of Israel from the life and practices of Egypt and getting them ready to meet the Lord at Mount Sinai was a monumental task! How does that apply to members today? Find gospel principles to help us escape the bondage of sin and prepare for the Second Coming in two powerful Old Testament stories on pp. 31-36.

Ever wondered about the Church's official teachings on the creation of mankind and evolution?

Strengthening Your Family

- Wiggles. Short attention spans. How do you hold young children's interest during family home evening? Learn from one mother's child-tested ideas on p. 67.
- For more good ideas on how to make family home evenings work, see page 21. Eight families share their success stories.
- Most accounts from Latter-day Saint Voices can be used to kick off great family home evening lessons. To teach your family about the lasting impact a good example can have, read "My Friend 'Milkshake,'" p. 69. Or start a discussion on following spiritual promptings by reading "Go to Work Now!" p. 68.

"Could I Let My Baby Go?"

After learning she is pregnant, an unmarried teenage girl worries about her future. How will she know what is best for her child? Can anything positive result from this difficult situation? See p. 60.

Successful Problem Solving

"We will make greater progress and do so more

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Christ Teaching the Parable of the Good Samaritan, by Robert Barrett



To the lawyer who tempted Him, Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan that helped the traveler wounded by thieves, the same man a priest and a Levite had passed by. "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:36–37).



PHOTOGRAPHY BY CRAIG DIMOND

*The remodeled
visitors'
centers on*

*Temple Square in Salt Lake City allow
patrons to explore a variety of new exhibits
having a unified theme: We believe in the
Lord Jesus Christ, and we follow the
direction of His prophets.*