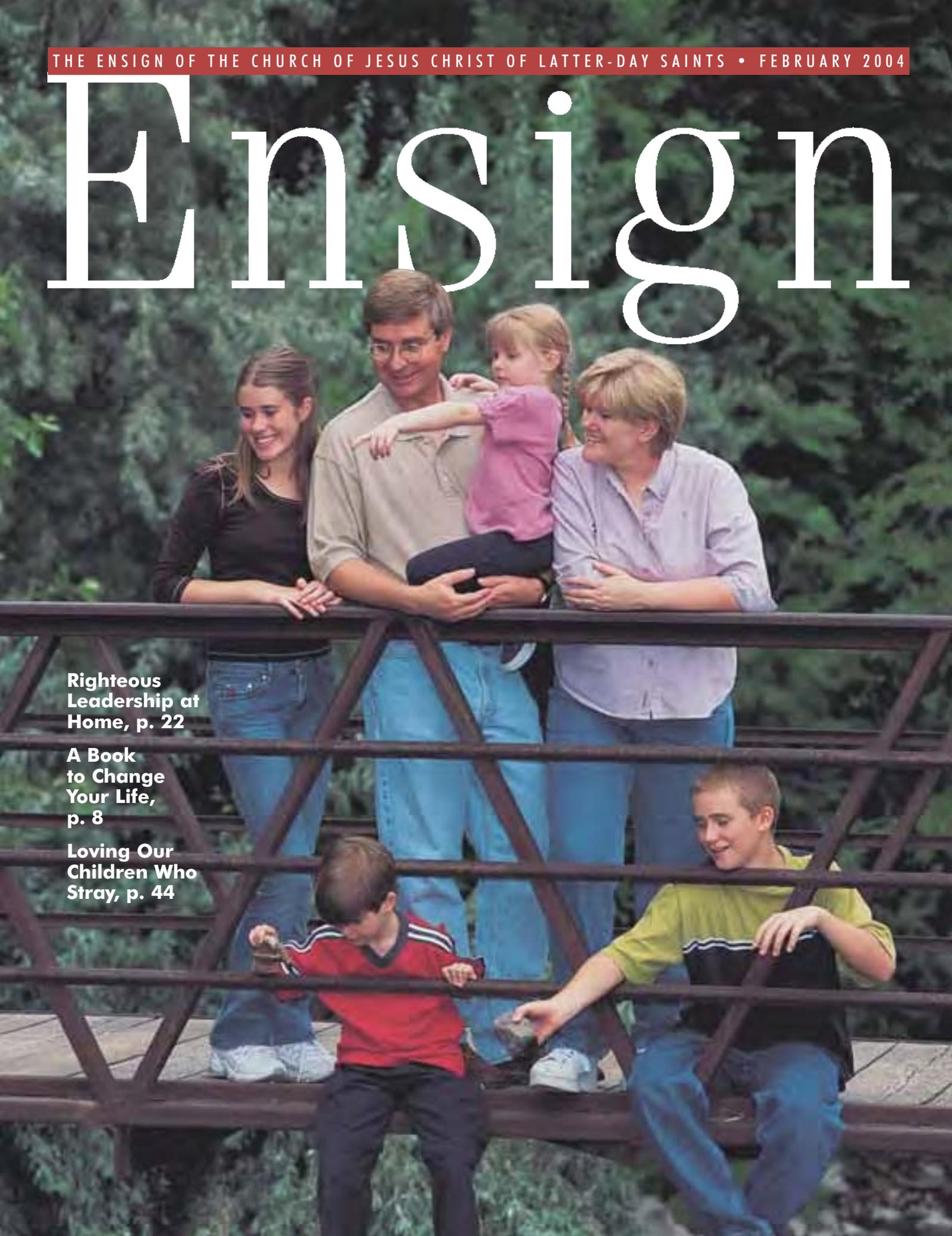


Ensign



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Leadership at
Home, p. 22**

**A Book
to Change
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Children Who
Stray, p. 44**



Lehi Building an Altar of Stones in the Valley of Lemuel, by Clark Kelley Price

“It came to pass that when [Lehi] had traveled three days in the wilderness, he pitched his tent in a valley by the side of a river of water. And it came to pass that he built an altar of stones, and made an offering unto the Lord, and gave thanks unto the Lord our God” (1 Nephi 2:6–7).

Ensign



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Four Cornerstones of Faith

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

During the past two decades, it has been my privilege to officiate at the dedication or rededication of more than 80 temples. The buildings have been opened to the general public prior to dedication. Tens and tens of thousands have gone through them. As they have felt of the spirit of these sacred structures and learned something of the purposes for which the temples have been built, those who have been our guests have recognized why, following dedication, we regard these buildings as sanctified and holy, reserved for sacred purposes and closed to the public.

Participating in these dedicatory services, one senses the true strength of the Church. That strength is in the hearts of the people, who are united by a bond of recognition of God as our Eternal Father and Jesus Christ as our Savior. Their individual testimonies are firmly established on a foundation of faith concerning things divine.

Ancient Cornerstone Ceremony

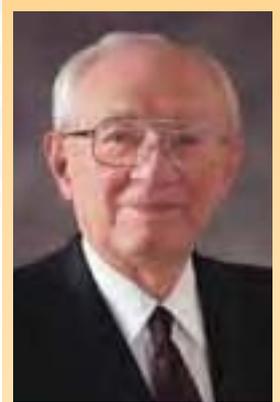
In each new temple we have had a cornerstone ceremony in harmony with a tradition that goes back to ancient times. Before the

general use of concrete, the foundation walls of the building were laid with large stones. A trench would be dug, and stones would be placed as footings. Starting at a point of beginning, the foundation wall would be run in one direction to a cornerstone; then the corner would be turned and the wall run to the next corner, where another stone was placed, from which the wall would be run to the next corner, and from there to the point of beginning. In many instances, including the construction of early temples in the Church, cornerstones were used at each junction point of the walls and put in place with ceremony. The final stone was spoken of as the chief cornerstone, and its placement became the reason for much celebration. With this cornerstone in position, the foundation was ready for the superstructure. Hence the analogy that Paul used in describing the true Church:

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

“In whom all the building fitly framed



Thanks be to God for the gift of His Beloved Son, who gave His life that we might live and who is the chief, immovable cornerstone of our faith and His Church.

together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord” (Ephesians 2:19–21).

Cornerstones of Our Faith

We have basic cornerstones on which this great latter-day Church has been established by the Lord and built, “fitly framed together.”

They are absolutely fundamental to this work—the very foundation, anchors on which it stands. I should like to speak briefly of these four essential cornerstones which anchor The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I mention first the chief cornerstone, whom we recognize and honor as the Lord Jesus Christ. The second is the vision given the Prophet Joseph Smith when the Father and the Son appeared to him. The third is the Book of Mormon, which speaks as a voice from the dust with the words of ancient prophets declaring the divinity and reality of the Savior of mankind. The fourth is the priesthood with all of its powers and authority, whereby men act in the name of God in administering the affairs of His kingdom. May I comment on each of these.

The Chief Cornerstone

Absolutely basic to our faith is our testimony of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who under a divine plan was born in Bethlehem of Judea. He grew in Nazareth as the carpenter’s son, within Him the elements of both mortality and immortality received, respectively, from His earthly mother and His Heavenly Father. In the course of His brief earthly ministry, He walked the dusty roads of the Holy Land, healing the sick, causing the blind to see, raising the dead, teaching doctrines both transcendent and beautiful. He was, as Isaiah had prophesied, “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3). He reached out to those whose burdens were heavy and invited them to cast their burdens upon Him, declaring, “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:30). He “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38) and was hated for it. His enemies came against Him. He was seized, tried on spurious charges, convicted



The First Vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith opened the marvelous work of restoration. It lifted the curtain on the long-promised dispensation of the fulness of times.

to satisfy the cries of the mob, and condemned to die on Calvary’s cross.

The nails pierced His hands and feet, and He hung in agony and pain, giving Himself a ransom for the sins of all men. He died crying, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

He was buried in a borrowed tomb and on the third day rose from the grave. He came forth triumphant, in a victory over death, the firstfruits of all that slept. With His Resurrection came the promise to all men that life is everlasting, that even as in Adam all die, in Christ all are made alive (see 1 Corinthians 15:20–22). Nothing in all of human history equals the wonder, the splendor, the magnitude, or the fruits of the matchless life of the Son of God, who died for each of us. He is our Savior. He is our Redeemer. As Isaiah foretold, “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

He is the chief cornerstone of the church which bears His name, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There is no other name given among men whereby we can be saved (see Acts 4:12). He is the author of our salvation, the giver of eternal life (see Hebrews 5:9). There is none to equal Him. There never has been. There never will be.

Thanks be to God for the gift of His Beloved Son, who gave His life that we might live and who is the chief, immovable cornerstone of our faith and His Church.

Joseph Smith's First Vision

The second cornerstone is the First Vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The year was 1820; the season, spring. The boy with questions walked into the grove of his father's farm. There, finding himself alone, he pleaded in prayer for that wisdom which James promised would be given liberally to those who ask of God in faith (see James 1:5). There, in circumstances which he has described in much detail, he beheld the Father and the Son, the great God of the universe and the risen Lord, both of whom spoke to him.

This transcendent experience opened the marvelous work of restoration. It lifted the curtain on the long-promised dispensation of the fulness of times.

For more than a century and a half, enemies, critics, and some would-be scholars have worn out their lives trying to disprove the validity of that vision. Of course they cannot understand it. The things of God are understood by the Spirit of God. There had been nothing of comparable magnitude since the Son of God walked the earth in mortality. Without it as a foundation stone for our faith and organization, we have nothing. With it, we have everything.

Much has been written, much will be written, in an effort to explain it away. The finite mind cannot comprehend it. But the testimony of the Holy Spirit, experienced by countless numbers of people all through the years since it

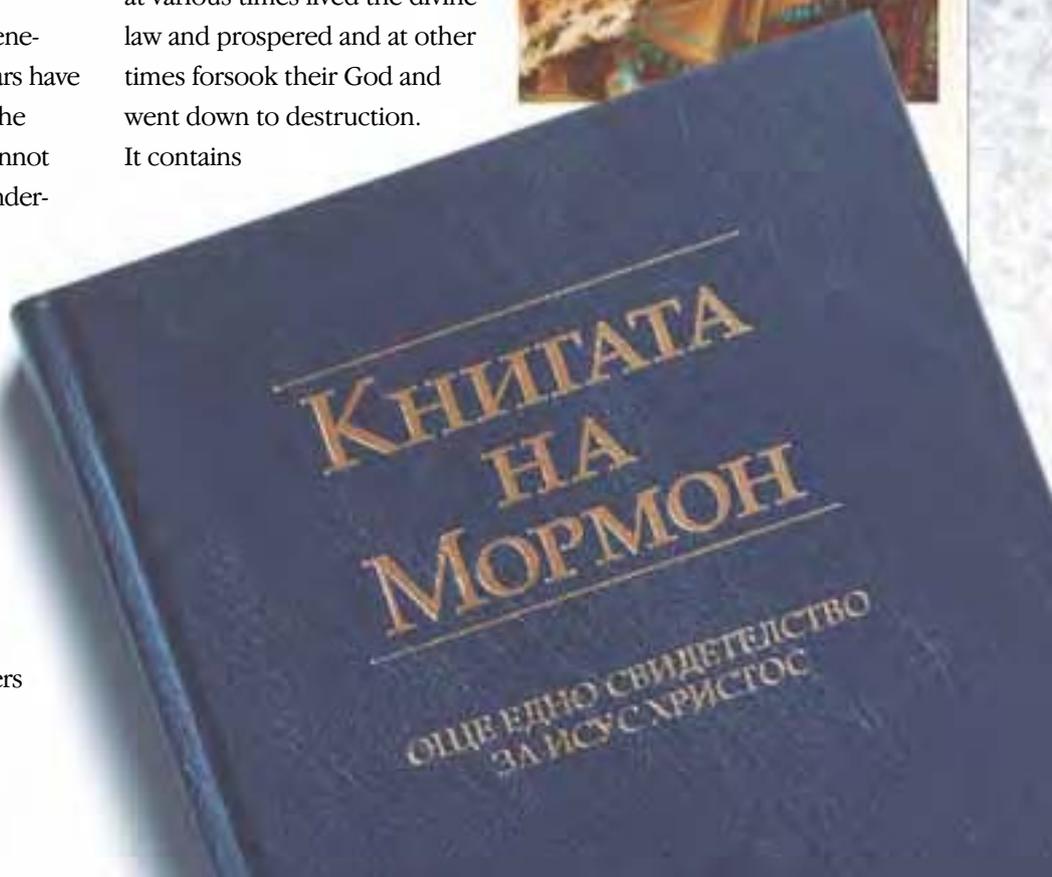
happened, bears witness that it is true, that it happened as Joseph Smith said it happened, that it was as real as the sunrise over Palmyra, that it is an essential foundation stone, a cornerstone, without which the Church could not be "fitly framed together."

The Book of Mormon

The third cornerstone is the Book of Mormon. It is real. It has weight and substance which can be physically measured. I open its pages and read, and it has language both beautiful and uplifting. The ancient record from which it was translated came out of the earth as a voice speaking from the dust. It came as the testimony of generations of men and women who lived their lives upon the earth, who struggled with adversity, who quarreled and fought, who at various times lived the divine law and prospered and at other times forsook their God and went down to destruction.

It contains

The ancient record from which the Book of Mormon was translated came out of the earth as a voice speaking from the dust. It came as the testimony of generations of men and women.



The full restoration of the priesthood involved the coming of John the Baptist—the forerunner of Christ—and of Peter, James, and John—they who faithfully walked with the Master.

what has been described as the fifth Gospel, a moving testament of the New World concerning the visit of the resurrected Redeemer on the soil of this hemisphere.

The evidence for its truth, for its validity in a world that is prone to demand evidence, lies not in archaeology or anthropology, though these may be helpful to some. It lies not in word research or historical analysis, though these may be confirmatory. The evidence for its truth and validity lies within the covers of the book itself. The test of its truth lies in



THE RESTORATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD. BY DEL PARSON

reading it. It is a book of God. Reasonable people may sincerely question its origin; but those who have read it prayerfully have come to know by a power beyond their natural senses that it is true, that it contains the word of God, that it outlines saving truths of the everlasting gospel, that it “came forth by the gift and power of God . . . to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ” (Book of Mormon title page).

It is here. It must be explained. It can be explained only as the translator himself explained its origin. Hand in hand with the Bible, whose companion volume it is, it stands as another witness to a doubting generation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. It is an unassailable cornerstone of our faith.

Restoration of the Priesthood

Cornerstone number four is the restoration to earth of priesthood power and authority. That authority was given to men anciently. The lesser authority was given to the sons of Aaron to administer in things temporal as well as in some sacred ecclesiastical ordinances. The higher priesthood was given by the Lord Himself to His Apostles, in accordance with His declaration to Peter: “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).

The full restoration of the priesthood involved the coming of John the Baptist—the forerunner of Christ, whose head was taken to satisfy the whims of a wicked woman—and of Peter, James, and John—they who faithfully walked with the Master before His death and proclaimed His Resurrection and divinity following His death. It involved Moses, Elias, and Elijah, each bringing priesthood keys to complete the work of restoring all of the acts and ordinances of previous dispensations in this, the great, final dispensation of the fullness of times.

The priesthood is here. It has been conferred upon us. We act in that authority. We speak as sons of God in the name of Jesus

Christ and as holders of this divinely given endowment. We know, for we have seen, the power of this priesthood. We have seen the sick healed, the lame made to walk, and the coming of light and knowledge and understanding to those who have been in darkness.

Paul wrote concerning the priesthood: “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron” (Hebrews 5:4). We have not acquired it through purchase or bargain. The Lord has given it to men who are considered worthy to receive it, regardless of station in life, the color of their skin, or the nation in which they live. It is the power and the authority to govern in the affairs of the kingdom of God. It is given only by ordination by the laying on of hands by those in authority to do so. The qualification for eligibility is obedience to the commandments of God.

There is no power on the earth like it. Its authority extends beyond life, through the veil of death, to the eternities ahead. It is everlasting in its consequences.

Shelter from the Storms

These four great God-given gifts are the unshakable cornerstones which anchor The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as well as the individual testimonies and convictions of its members: (1) the reality and the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God; (2) the sublime vision given the Prophet Joseph Smith of the Father and the Son, ushering in the dispensation of the fulness of times; (3) the Book of Mormon as the word of God speaking in declaration of the divinity of the Savior; and (4) the priesthood of God divinely conferred to be exercised in righteousness for the blessing of our Father’s children.

Each of these cornerstones is related to the others, each connected by a foundation of apostles and prophets, all tied to the chief cornerstone, Jesus Christ. On this has been established His Church, “fitly framed together” for the blessing of all who will partake of its offering (see Ephesians 2:20–21).

So undergirded beneath and fitly framed above, this Church stands as the creation of the Almighty. It is a shelter from the storms of life. It is a refuge of peace for those in

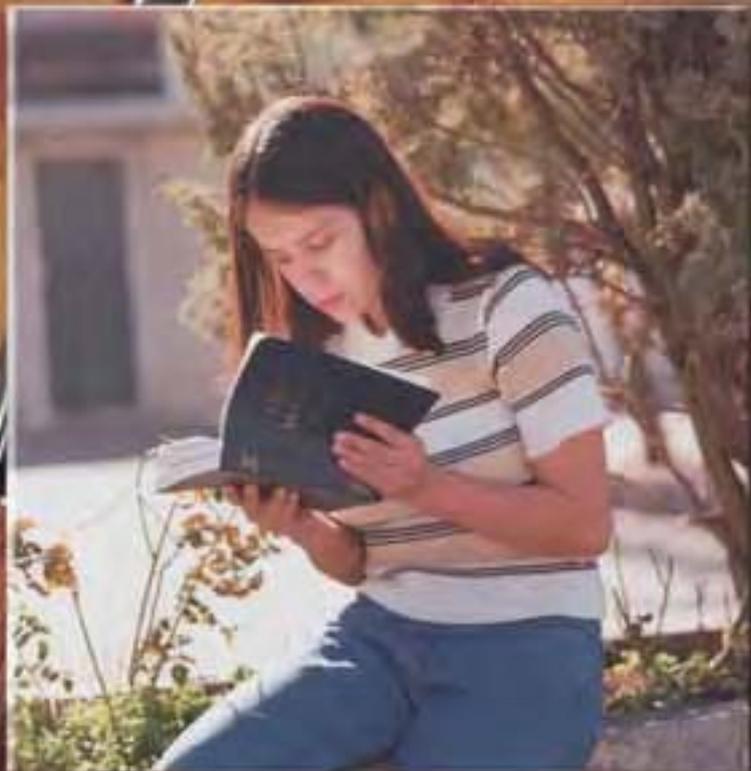
distress. It is a house of succor for those in need. It is the conservator of eternal truth and the teacher of the divine will. It is the true and living Church of the Master.

Of these things I give solemn testimony, bearing witness that God has spoken again to open this final glorious dispensation; that His Church is here, the church which carries the name of His Beloved Son; that there has come from the earth the record of an ancient people, bearing witness to this generation of the work of the Almighty; that the everlasting priesthood is among men for their blessing and the governance of His work; that we are members of the true and living Church of Jesus Christ, brought forth for the blessing of all who will receive its message; that it is immovably established on a foundation of apostles and prophets, with cornerstones of unshakable firmness put in place by Him for the accomplishment of His eternal purposes, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. ■

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After you prayerfully prepare, share this message using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. A few examples follow:

1. Give a family member a small board and a child’s building block; then ask the individual to balance the board on top of the block. Have the individual repeat this with two blocks some distance apart, then three, then four so that family members can see the stability offered by having four cornerstones under the board. Label the blocks with the four cornerstones in President Hinckley’s message.
2. Ask family members to think of their personal testimonies as a temple and then to think about how strong the cornerstones of their testimonies are. What could they do to strengthen their cornerstones?
3. Ask family members to think about the cornerstones of their faith. Are their cornerstones the same as President Hinckley’s? How will their cornerstones affect their daily lives?



The Book of Mormon Will Change Your Life

BY ELDER HENRY B. EYRING
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Some years ago, my son Matthew came home from a seminary council meeting and said, “Dad, I want you to carve something.” He gave me the text. The plaque I carved says, “The Book of Mormon will change your life.”¹

My message to you is simple: What was written on that plaque is true. Did you notice the words of the quotation? It does not say the teaching or the study of the book will change your life. It says, “The *Book of Mormon* will change your life.” I would like to explain why I know that is true: The book itself is the most wonderful curriculum we have—not only from the point of view of the student, but from the point of view of the teacher.

There are four things I try to do when I teach the scriptures: read, prove, prepare, and testify. Let me address each of those one at a time.

Read

Before writing this, I set aside a short period of time to read the Book of Mormon. It changed my life. Suddenly, I saw it as a movie,

in full color and on a wide screen. People became more real to me. I pictured the Savior and His visit almost as if I had been there. And I had a feeling for Nephi, who somehow knew about the change you and I want so much to make in our lives and in the lives of our students. If I was going to teach what the change is, I would use Mosiah 27:25–26:

“And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters;

“And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.”

Now, that is the change. It is not to be a little better. It is not to know a little more. It is to be born again, to be changed by the power of the Atonement.

You and I know that if a person will read the Book of Mormon, it will describe that change and how to have it. I beg of you to have faith that your students will want to read the Book of Mormon, that it will draw them as it will draw you.



There are four things I try to do when I teach the scriptures: read, prove, prepare, and testify.



As you read Isaiah in the Book of Mormon, try to believe that Nephi knew Isaiah and he knew imagery. Nephi said to liken Isaiah directly unto you.

I have worried about the barrier of Isaiah. In fact, I have pondered this thought: “Why did Nephi put the barrier there?”

There is a scripture that I used for years in the seminary and institute of religion program in writing curriculum and in designing courses. The verse says:

“And I did read many things unto them which were written in the books of Moses; but that I might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah; for I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” (1 Nephi 19:23).

I have thought perhaps what Nephi is trying to tell us is that he recognized the barrier of Isaiah. He knew that the book of Isaiah is full of imagery. Of all the scriptures, few have as many images; therefore, Isaiah can be very difficult. I believe what Nephi meant by “liken all scriptures unto us” was that they could be directly applied.

Many are more skilled than I am at putting scriptures in their historic context. There are wonderful techniques of understanding metaphor, simile, and allegory in the scriptures, and I hope you will learn as much about that as you can. But I hope you will learn one more thing. As you read

Isaiah in the Book of Mormon, try to believe that Nephi knew Isaiah and he knew imagery. Nephi said to liken Isaiah directly unto you. So I tried it. I read Isaiah’s words again, assuming Nephi picked the parts of Isaiah that I, without worrying about the imagery, could take directly to my heart as if the Lord were speaking to me.

Now I will share with you my own experiment. It is not one you would teach, because for each person the Lord will speak directly to the heart with a different message. This is personal; it lets you look into my heart.

I began to read in 2 Nephi 12 and thought: “The Lord is speaking to me. What is it He wants to tell me directly?” Then I came to a verse in the Isaiah passages that jumped out as if it were already underlined: “And it shall come to pass that the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day” (v. 11).

This is describing a day when the Savior will come, a day we all look for and want our students to prepare for. This scripture says that in that day, all of us who thought we were special and wonderful will seem smaller, and the Lord will be exalted. We will see better who He is, how much we love Him, and how humble we should be.

I kept reading in the Book of Mormon. I went past Isaiah, and I came to Ether 3:2. I saw something I had never seen before because I believed that Isaiah was talking to me directly, not in imagery.

The brother of Jared was dealing with the problem of getting light into a boat. As you will recall, when he sought the Lord’s help, the Lord asked what the brother of Jared was going to do about it. He had done the best he could. It was going to take something beyond his own ability. And so the brother of Jared said, “O Lord, thou hast said that we must be encompassed about by the floods. Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry . . .”

As I was reading this, I could see it in color. His experience almost seemed to be happening as I read about it.

“And do not be angry with thy servant because of his weakness before thee; for we know that thou art holy and dwellest in the heavens, and that we are unworthy before

thee . . .” Suddenly the aforementioned words of Isaiah came back to me.

Then I continued reading: “Because of the fall our natures have become evil continually; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires” (Ether 3:2).

I was not thinking so much about light in a ship; I was thinking about the great change and how much I want it in my life and how much you want it in yours. I understood why Isaiah told me it would be helpful to foresee the day when the Lord would be exalted and to know how much I depend upon Him. We need Him, and the faith we have in Him makes us see Him as great and exalted and ourselves as small and dependent. As great as the brother of Jared was, he saw himself as we need to see ourselves if we are to have the Atonement work in our lives.

I will make you this promise about reading the Book of Mormon: You will be drawn to it as you understand that the Lord has embedded in it His message to you. Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni knew that, and those who put it together put in messages for you. I hope you have confidence that the book was written for your students. There are simple, direct messages for them that will tell them how to change. That is what the book is about. It is a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Atonement and how it may work in their lives. You will have an experience this year feeling the change that comes by the power of the Atonement because of studying this book.

Prove

The second thing all of us teachers think about, pray about, and work at is “to prove.” You want to prove the gospel of Jesus Christ. You want your students to know it is true.

Some time ago my wife and I were talking about a lesson she had to give. We spoke about the fact that although

the lesson had one subject and several different aims, the only way you could get at it was to teach the Atonement. Then we realized that if you are teaching anything that matters, you are teaching about the Atonement.

John, our then-18-year-old son, was sitting there. I was waxing eloquent by saying that really great teachers would always know they were teaching basically about the Atonement. John then taught me something about proving. He told us about a seminary teacher. He said: “You know, Dad, he knew something. He knew that you could bear testimony to young people. You could teach that the Atonement is something they need. You could teach them that they need to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to repent, and to be baptized. They need to feel the Holy Ghost. You can do all that, and they will hear you. But they may not believe you. They need to experience it before they will believe they need it.”

Then John described a teacher who had persuaded some students to prove something. The teacher’s challenge was to not go to inappropriate movies and to see whether the students could feel the effect in their lives. According to John’s report, they did. They could feel the companionship of the

Holy Ghost returning.

John felt that all the sermons in the world trying to prove there was a Fall would not be nearly so effective as the person trying to do the right thing and then feeling the power of the Holy Ghost in his or her life. There is a difference we can feel between our fallen natures and our being lifted above them by the power of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the effects of the Atonement.

You want your students to see that their challenge is not to prove that the Book of Mormon is true but to prove to God that *they*—the students—are true. When they do this, they will know the book is true. And when they prove that they will do what the book says, God will tell them more:



I will make you this promise about reading the Book of Mormon: You will be drawn to it as you understand that the Lord has embedded in it His message to you.

“And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.

“And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation” (3 Nephi 26:9–10).

As you prove the Book of Mormon to your students, you will realize you do not prove it through arguments. You do not even prove it through great examples or stories. Those will help, but your students will prove the Book of Mormon by saying, “I believe it is true; I will try it.” Once they have proved themselves to God, then the proof will come to them because they will see the spiritual fruit.

The Book of Mormon is about people proving their belief to God little by little. And then He confirms their belief and gives them more.

One of the most wonderful confirmations I know is found in the book of Ether. The Lord asked the brother



Y*ou can prepare the hearts of your students.*

Find little things to do for them. Pay the price of service, and God will honor it.

of Jared if he saw more than the Lord’s finger.

“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” (Ether 3:10–13).

The brother of Jared did not come to that moment in a sudden jump but over a lifetime. He was given a little light, he had faith, and he exercised it. When the Lord saw that he believed, He gave him a little more light, until finally the Lord said essentially, “Will you believe anything I say?” And the Lord knew that the brother of Jared told the truth when he answered, “Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie” (v. 12).

The Book of Mormon is written in such a way that students will feel it contains principles they should try. You need to be cautious that you do not set up applications or challenges that are not suited to that student, because God will be speaking to that individual. As you read the Book of Mormon, you and your students will know some things you should do. As you do them, you will have greater light given to you because you will have proved that you believe. I bear testimony that however much you have learned from the Book of Mormon before, you should read it again and prove it. Prove it by proving yourself. Do the things you feel impressed to do, and you will find things in it that you have never seen before.

Prepare

The next step a teacher takes is to prepare. You remember how the sons of Mosiah prepared. In fact, we

The brother of Jared was given a little light, he had faith, and he exercised it. When the Lord saw that he believed, He gave him a little more light.



**Ammon chose to serve the people he intended to teach:
“Therefore Ammon became a servant to king Lamoni.”
Remember that all your life if you want to know something
about preparation.**

use the scriptures that describe their preparation, especially how they fasted and prayed, as examples of preparation (see Alma 17:3, 9). But in my rereading of the Book of Mormon, two verses from the book of Alma stood out:

“Therefore, this was the cause for which the sons of Mosiah had undertaken the work, that perhaps they might bring them unto repentance; that perhaps they might bring them to know of the plan of redemption.

“Therefore they separated themselves one from another, and went forth among them, *every man alone*, according to the word and power of God which was given unto him” (Alma 17:16–17; emphasis added).

The word *alone* makes me think of you going into your classroom. You go alone. They went alone, among a ferocious people, with the intent to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. (There will be days when your students may seem nearly as ferocious.) The sons of Mosiah went not simply to get a few converts. They were to help people change their lives by the power of the Atonement.

Ammon had prepared by fasting, praying, and studying the scriptures and gaining the spiritual endowment that we all need to teach. But I am struck by the way he taught. Remember, King Lamoni invited him to receive things, to have things done for him, but instead he chose to serve the people he intended to teach: “But Ammon said unto him: Nay, but I will be thy servant. Therefore Ammon became a servant to king Lamoni” (Alma 17:25).

Underline that and remember it all your life if you want to know something about preparation. Ammon prepared himself, but he did more. He prepared his student to be taught the doctrines of salvation. How did he do it?

“And it came to pass that he was set among other servants to watch the flocks of Lamoni, according to the custom of the Lamanites” (v. 25).



Now, remember that he not only protected the servants and the animals at the waters of Sebus, but he drove off the enemy. When the other servants brought the evidence of what Ammon had done, King Lamoni said, “Where is he?” They said, “Oh, he is in the stables. He is doing every little thing to serve you” (see Alma 18:8–9).

Isn’t that odd? He was called to teach the doctrines of salvation, but he was in the stables. Don’t you think he should have been praying and fasting and polishing his teaching plan? No, he was in the stables.

King Lamoni had been brought up with a belief that there was a God but that whatever the king did was right. He had been specifically taught false doctrine that might have made him impervious to feelings of guilt. Do you remember that when he heard where Ammon was, a feeling of guilt, of fear that he had done wrong in the killing of the servants, came over him (see Alma 18:5)? Remember the effect in Alma chapter 18:

“And they answered the king, and said: Whether he be the Great Spirit or a man, we know not; but this much we do know, that he cannot be slain by the enemies of the king; neither can they scatter the king’s flocks when he is with us, because of his expertness and great strength; therefore, we know that he is a friend to the king. And now, O king, we do not believe that a man has such great power, for we know he cannot be slain.

“And now, when the king heard these words, he said unto them: Now I know that it is the Great Spirit; and he



You need to testify. I can promise you a wonderful year because the Book of Mormon is full of testimony. Consider the last testimony in the Book of Mormon (see Moroni 10:32–33). I think it was put at the end for a purpose.

has come down at this time to preserve your lives, that I might not slay you as I did your brethren” (Alma 18:3–4).

I have always focused before on how mixed up Lamoni was in his doctrine, without seeing the miracle. The miracle was that a spiritual need was created in a man, that he might be taught the gospel of Jesus Christ. His heart was broken. He felt guilt. And it came from the temporal things that Ammon had done.

I bear you my testimony that you can prepare the hearts of your students. Serve them; find little things to do for them. Pay the price of service, and God will honor it. I will make you that promise. Do not worry if your students are not lovable at times. Just do something for them, and they will seem a little more lovable to you. It will be a gift from God.

I bear my testimony that the Holy Ghost will prepare your students, as He prepared King Lamoni for Ammon. Never, never underestimate the spiritual value of doing temporal things well for those whom you serve.

I pray that all of you might prepare through fasting and prayer and testimony. I hope you will prepare the hearts of your students. Be their servants, and you will love them. And they will feel your love. And more important, they will feel God’s love. The Book of Mormon will help you in that.

Testify

You need to testify. I can promise you a wonderful year because the Book of Mormon is full of testimony. You cannot teach the Book of Mormon without having as your companions the great testifiers, including the Savior Himself.

Nephi wrote: “And now, my beloved brethren, and also Jew, and all ye ends of the earth, hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. And if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ, and he hath given them unto me; and they teach all men that they should do good” (2 Nephi 33:10).

God loves you and wants you to have power as you teach the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ. I bear testimony that you will be given that power.

Here is the last testimony in the Book of Mormon. I think it was put at the end for a purpose: “Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

“And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot” (Moroni 10:32–33).

I pray that you may know you are invited by God’s servants to invite His children to come unto Christ. If you forget yourself, remember Him, and serve your students, God will bless you and them, that many, if not all, will come unto Christ and feel that mighty change in their lives. ■

Adapted from an address given at a Church Educational System religious educators’ conference at Brigham Young University on 17 August 1990.

NOTE

1. Ezra Taft Benson, “To the ‘Youth of the Noble Birthright,’” *Ensign*, May 1986, 43.

TO EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH

By Sharon Price Anderson

Remember . . .

*. . . youthful Joseph,
elect and birthright blessed,
despised by his brethren.
Jealous of the coat
when obedient he came,
they conspired and cast him
struggling and stripped
into the pit nor heard
the anguished pleadings
of his soul but sold him
into Egypt as a slave.*

*. . . faithful Joseph,
honorable and pure,
prospered of the Lord
in Potiphar's house.
He would not defile his
master's bed, hearkened
not to temptation's
persistent voice, refused
such wickedness and fled.*

*. . . fruitful Joseph,
wise and discreet.*

*Knowing dreams and plan of God,
he gathered from plenty corn and
wheat to save his father's house.
In dearth his brethren came
seeking bread of life,
and Joseph, forgiving,
nourished them
without money, gold, or price
and preserved by great
deliverance posterity of promise.*

*Again the famine waxes sore;
many hunger for truth and right.
The waning world wants
purpose, courage, honor,
knowledge, mercy, life.
Know that you have bread
to fill the need.
Remember, oh, remember,
you are Joseph's seed!*

Blessings upon



Hymns can teach us, move us to repentance, strengthen our testimonies, and bring our families closer together.

BY JOHN S. TANNER

In the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord declares that He delights “in the song of the heart” and that He will answer “the song of the righteous . . . with a blessing upon their heads” (D&C 25:12). The Lord has surely showered blessings upon me and my family as we have sung hymns to Him with all our hearts. Through hymns, I have taught and been taught lasting and life-changing gospel lessons. The hymns have moved me to “repentance and good works,” strengthened my “testimony and faith,” comforted

me, consoled me, and deepened my determination to endure.¹ I have felt the Spirit through the hymns in powerful ways. Indeed, some of my sweetest and most tender spiritual experiences are associated with hymn singing.

I recall a precious family experience on a Sunday evening not long ago, when my wife, Susan, and I spontaneously gathered around the piano with our teenage children and a few of their friends to sing the songs of Zion. This scene has been repeated often in our family. On this occasion, I went to the living room by the piano and started to sing. Soon I was joined by Susan, who sang with and accompanied me. One by one our children joined us. One daughter brought her friends. As we sang, the Spirit came tangibly into the room, filling our hearts with love for the Lord and for each

Our Heads



I have sweet childhood memories of hymn singing on family road trips.

other. We each chose favorite hymns. The texts let us speak of truths that lay close to our hearts, while the music let us express tender feelings of testimony and joy which, in contemporary culture, parents and teenage children rarely share so openly or without embarrassment.

As I looked around the room, my heart swelled with joy, and I felt the urge to seize this precious moment in time, for “the fugitive moment refuses to stay.”² So I fixed the scene in my mind as a treasure for future reflection, like Wordsworth’s jocund daffodils,³ and will remember always that tender tableau of loved ones gathered around the piano, fervently singing hymns from our hearts as the sun cast its soft, fading glow on a peaceful Sabbath. Surely this moment was a taste of heaven on earth and a foretaste of

what joys await us in heaven when we shall sing a new song before the throne of God (see Revelation 5:9; 14:2–3). We lifted our hearts in song to God, and He answered with a blessing upon our heads.

I treasure many such moments, including experiences from my youth. Perhaps my sweetest childhood memory of hymns is of singing them on long family trips from southern California to Utah. Each of us took turns choosing a favorite song; often we chose hymns. I always chose “Carry On” first.⁴ I am not sure why, because my favorite hymn as a child was “I Stand All Amazed.”⁵ But this was a long piece, by page count the longest in the previous hymnbook, and I liked that. Plus it seemed well suited to our desert journey.

**A WONDERFUL AID
TO OUR WORSHIP**



“Sacred music has a unique capacity to communicate our feelings of love for the Lord. This kind of communi-

cation is a wonderful aid to our worship. Many have difficulty expressing worshipful feelings in words, but all can join in communicating such feelings through the inspired words of our hymns.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Worship through Music,” Ensign, Nov. 1994, 10.

My fondest memory of these trips is of curling up late at night on the front seat between Mom and Dad. There, in the black night, the sky studied with myriad stars, I’d listen to the blending of my parents’ voices as they sang hymns and old-fashioned favorites. The songs often focused on the Savior. They sang of their testimony of Him:

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

*He lives to bless me with his love.
He lives to plead for me above.
He lives my hungry soul to feed.
He lives to bless in time of need.⁶*

And they sang of their need for His presence:

*I need thee, oh, I need thee;
Every hour I need thee!
Oh, bless me now, my Savior;
I come to thee!⁷*

Even now, after so many years, the memory of my parents singing these songs brings a lump to my throat. From such moments I learned about my parents’ love for the Savior and for each other. What blessings have been answered upon my head because my parents lifted up to God the songs of their hearts!

No doubt my parents had us sing not only to edify us but also to control and curb the chaos created by about a dozen restless children crammed in a station wagon for hundreds

*As I sang with
my family
and friends,
the Spirit filled our
hearts with love for
the Lord and for
each other.*



of miles. Susan and I have adopted the same strategy as parents, as I'm sure many other parents have. When we travel, we frequently sing to forestall a fight. Many a child's spirit has been subdued and softened, many a quarrel quelled by the mollifying magic of music. Singing is an effective form of parental crowd control.

But it is more. It is a moving and memorable way to teach the gospel. Hymns can be powerful sermons. As the First Presidency says in the preface to the hymnbook: "Some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns. Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end."⁸ I like this statement. I especially like its implicit recognition of why hymns can be such effective sermons: "Hymns move us." Similarly, the First Presidency states, "Music has boundless powers for moving families toward greater spirituality and devotion to the gospel."⁹

Hymns combine the power of poetry and of music. Anciently, poetry was praised for its ability to teach and delight. How much more apt is this maxim for hymns, which at their best wed inspired poetry with inspiring melody. Music doubles the delight and deepens the power of words to teach. It enables us to remember the words better, which can come into our minds almost unbidden on the wings of song. And it suffuses the verse with emotion, thus bringing the message home to our hearts and not just to our minds.

Since I am not competent to account for the ineffable power of music, let me focus on hymn texts that have instructed and delighted me and my family. In so doing, I shall describe how Susan and I have tried to teach our children to love the hymns, which love in turn has been the source of so many rich blessings upon our heads.

Using the Hymns in Our Family

Many of the things we have done to communicate love for the hymns can be illustrated by "Lead, Kindly Light,"¹⁰ a family favorite. Our children associate it with stories from our days in graduate school. They know that the phrase "one step enough" was our family watchword in the early

years of our marriage as Susan and I tried to walk by faith, not knowing "the distant scene." We have told them often of how the hymn inspired us. We have taught them the doctrine the hymn teaches about walking by faith. And now, as young adults, they are striving to apply the doctrine by discerning and following the light that illuminates their own footsteps into uncertain futures.

We have also tried to teach them something about the history of the song. I have explained the circumstances under which John Henry Newman composed it. And I have taught them that my great-uncle, President Harold B. Lee, loved this song, that he lived close to the Spirit, and that he loved the last lines because he looked forward to the day when he would see again "those angel faces" of his wife, Fern Tanner Lee, and his daughter Maureen, whom he "loved long since, and lost awhile." We sing the song often. And many, if not all, of the family have learned the words by heart.

Learning by Heart

I like the metaphor for memorization: "learning by heart." Memorization is unduly disparaged by our culture. But there is great power in committing things to memory, where they can work their way into our being and be recalled in times of need. I encourage my children to memorize by telling them that the best present they can give me for my birthday or for holidays is to memorize a poem, scripture, or piece of music. That way they get to keep what they give away.

Many of us can memorize the words to our hymns. And even if we don't know them perfectly by heart, we can sing them in a way that is not so book-bound. Perhaps then we might pay more attention to the message. We ought to sing more joyfully and with more feeling.

Studying the Lyrics

Another way to love the hymns is to talk about the lyrics. I like to call attention to rhymes and wordplays, such as in the concluding line of "Because I Have Been Given Much": "thus shall my thanks be thanks indeed" (in deed).¹¹ I like

A photograph of a woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt, kneeling in a field of tall, golden corn. She has her hands clasped in prayer, looking down. The background shows more corn stalks and a glimpse of a house with a porch in the distance.

Although warned to cease praying, Amanda Smith stole away to a cornfield, where she pleaded for the Lord's help. Her answer came in the form of a hymn.

to explain archaic phrases, such as “in the sultry glebe” (in the sweltering field),¹² “hie to Kolob” (hasten to God’s home),¹³ or “without a city wall” (outside a city wall).¹⁴ I like to discuss the structure of the texts, such as Edward L. Hart’s “Our Savior’s Love,” which focuses in each successive verse, respectively, on the Savior, Spirit, and Father.¹⁵ I like to interchange tunes and texts so as to bring the words to life in new ways.¹⁶ Using Karen Lynn Davidson’s book *Our Latter-day Hymns: The Stories and the Messages* (1988) as my guide, I tell stories about the composers or the uses to which the hymns have been put.

I also like to call attention to the thematic groupings in the hymnbook. I’m fond of a group of hymns unified by imagery of the sea, such as “Jesus, Lover of My Soul”¹⁷ and “Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me.” “As a mother stills her child, thou canst hush the ocean wild.”¹⁸ What a wonderful line!

Choosing Favorite Hymns

It’s good for families to develop favorite hymns and for children to learn what songs their parents love. My children know that I like “Away in a Manger” and any hymn by Cecil Frances Alexander. They know that I like comforting hymns

such as “Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee” and “How Gentle God’s Commands,” and rousing anthems such as “Press Forward, Saints,” “For All the Saints,” and “Hark, All Ye Nations!”¹⁹ And they know that the second verse of the latter hymn has special meaning for their grandparents, who sang it in Czechoslovakia immediately after the fall of Communism: “Searching in darkness, nations have wept; watching for dawn, their vigil they’ve kept. All now rejoice, the long night is o’er. Truth is on earth once more!”²⁰

Blessed through a Hymn

I like to recall the story of an early Saint for whom the seventh verse of “How Firm a Foundation”²¹ became an answer from the Lord and a blessing upon her head. Her name is Amanda Smith, a woman of great faith. A Campbellite convert from Ohio, she arrived with her husband and five children at Haun’s Mill, Missouri, just in time to be caught up in a brutal massacre. When the mob attacked, Amanda fled the scene with two of her children, bullets flying around her. Others in her family were not so fortunate. As she returned from hiding, she discovered that her husband and a son were dead and another son was seriously wounded.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Ask family members to find how the Tanner family uses hymns and to identify the blessings they have received from using them (see pages 16–20). Hold a family activity that uses some of the ideas in this article.

2. Read together the story of Amanda Smith, looking for how she was blessed by a hymn (see pages 20–21). Invite family members to share experiences of how they have been blessed by hymns.

But it is not the horror of those events I want to recall; rather, it is how the Lord revealed to Amanda that He would not forsake her—not even in her deepest distress. He did so in the words of the hymn.

Amanda describes an event that took place in the weeks that followed:

“All the Mormons in the neighborhood had fled out of the State, excepting a few families of the bereaved women and children. . . . In our utter desolation, what could we women do but pray? Prayer was our only source of comfort; our Heavenly Father our only helper.”

The mobbers warned the women to cease their praying, so Amanda tried to pray in silence. But she could not bear it. So, she continues:

“I stole down to a corn field. . . . It was as the temple of the Lord to me at that moment. I prayed aloud and most fervently. When I emerged from the corn a voice spoke to me. It was a voice as plain as I ever hear[d] one. It was no silent, strong impression of the spirit, but a voice, repeating a verse of the Saint’s hymn”:

*The soul that on Jesus bath leaned for repose
I will not, I cannot, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, . . .
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!*

She testifies, “From that moment I had no more fear. I felt that nothing could hurt me.”

And, in fact, no more harm came to her. When the mob came back to her house, she confronted them boldly and they dispersed. The two men she thought had stayed behind to kill her took pity on her instead and left her a fat hog to eat.

Shortly thereafter, when her injured son had recovered enough to leave, Amanda walked boldly into the home of the captain of the mob and demanded her horses back. “I did not fear the captain of the mob,” she says, “for I had the Lord’s promise that nothing should hurt me.” She took one horse from the man’s home and another she

found nearby. Rather than kill her, as was threatened, the man gave her flour and honey and sent her on her way. “The Lord had kept his

word,” she concludes. “The soul who on Jesus had leaned for succor had not been forsaken.”²²

Amanda Smith learned the truth of the revelation given only months after the Church was organized—that the Lord delights in sacred song and blesses those who lift their hearts in hymns to Him (see D&C 25:12). She learned as well that He blesses us not only *for* our hymns but *by* our hymns.

In our day, the First Presidency has said: “Brothers and sisters, let us use the hymns to invite the Spirit of the Lord into our congregations, our homes, and our personal lives. Let us memorize and ponder them, recite and sing them, and partake of their spiritual nourishment. Know that the song of the righteous is a prayer unto our Father in Heaven ‘and it shall be answered with a blessing upon [your] heads.’”²³ We, too, will be blessed both for and by singing sacred hymns. ■

John S. Tanner is a member of the Edgemont 20th Ward, Provo Utah Edgemont Stake.

NOTES

1. See “First Presidency Preface,” *Hymns*, ix.
2. “Come, Let Us Anew,” *Hymns*, no. 217.
3. “I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud.”
4. *Hymns*, no. 255.
5. *Hymns*, no. 193.
6. “I Know That My Redeemer Lives,” *Hymns*, no. 136.
7. “I Need Thee Every Hour,” *Hymns*, no. 98.
8. *Hymns*, ix.
9. *Hymns*, x.
10. *Hymns*, no. 97.
11. *Hymns*, no. 219.
12. “The Lord My Pasture Will Prepare,” *Hymns*, no. 109.
13. “If You Could Hie to Kolob,” *Hymns*, no. 284.
14. “There Is a Green Hill Far Away,” *Hymns*, no. 194.
15. *Hymns*, no. 113.
16. See *Hymns*, 405.
17. *Hymns*, no. 102.
18. *Hymns*, no. 104.
19. *Hymns*, no. 206, 141, 125, 81, 82, 264.
20. *Hymns*, no. 264.
21. *Hymns*, no. 85.
22. See Andrew Jenson, comp., *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (1901–36), 2:792, 796–97.
23. *Hymns*, x.

More on this topic: See Merrill J. Bateman, “The Power of Hymns,” *Ensign*, July 2001, 14–20; Dallin H. Oaks, “Worship through Music,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 9–12.

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Presiding Righteously in the Home

The scriptures teach how a man should exercise his priesthood in dealing with family members.

BY ELDER YASUO NIIYAMA

Area Authority Seventy
Asia North Area

Some years ago I had a dream that changed my life. It also changed the way I treat my wife and children. In the dream, I was driving a car on a dark night. It was a two-lane road in a rather quiet countryside. I saw a car coming from the opposite direction at high speed; suddenly it swerved into my lane. I did my best to avoid the car, but the other driver increased his speed. I knew we were going to crash and found myself praying hard: “Heavenly Father, please help me. I cannot die yet. I have a sweet wife and [at that time] three lovely children. Please, please . . .” I felt the impact and was thrown out of the car.

When I hit the ground, I immediately woke up and found it was just a dream. “Oh, what a relief!” I thought. Then I asked myself,

“Have I been a good husband and father? Can I say I have been the best husband I could be? What would I leave my children if I died?”

I could not go back to sleep that night. I recommitted myself to the Lord and decided to love my wife and children more. So that my family would have my testimony recorded, I wrote down 42 statements expressing my belief in doctrines and principles of the gospel, the things I would most want to leave my children if I were to die.

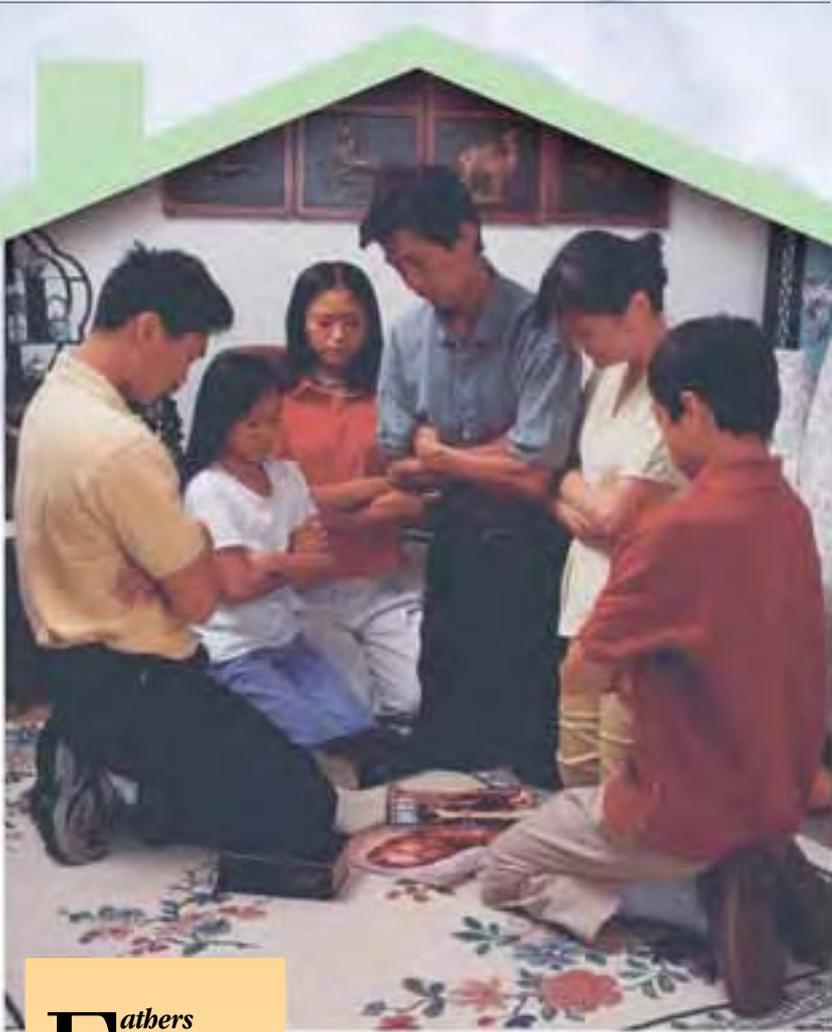
A New Perspective

I gained a new perspective on what it means to preside righteously in the home after I joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and found that this Church helped me have a happy family. I came to understand that there are some basic doctrines of the restored gospel that guide husbands and fathers in fulfilling their roles.

One of the great experiences I had before I got married was to live with several member families in the United States while I attended a university there. These parents held family home evening every week, studied the



It is the father's responsibility to gather the family together for family home evening and for family councils. When we join together, we develop greater love.



Fathers should teach that personal and family prayers are the most powerful communication tools for receiving revelation and for increasing spirituality.

scriptures together, and had family prayer on a daily basis. Of course, they at times had challenges. But the way they solved the problems was consistent with gospel teachings.

In watching their examples and actually participating as a member of their families, I decided that someday I, too, would like to have a family similar to theirs. I observed that their families were blessed as these fathers followed the counsel now given in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World”: “By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families.”¹

Presiding Righteously

The family is the basic unit of the Church, so righteous behavior within the home is

vital. Indeed it is central to our personal progress and the spiritual progress of our families. There are several things a husband and father can do to teach and support this righteous behavior, as well as to exemplify it.

Know the doctrines and principles. In order to preside righteously in the home, a husband and father must first come to know the doctrines and principles of the restored gospel. Without the gospel, some men refuse to accept the responsibility of being a husband or of becoming a father. They are more interested in other pursuits, selfishly focusing only on themselves, or they just do not have the courage and commitment necessary to fulfill these divine roles.

Studying hard and gaining a good education are necessary and worthy pursuits, but we should remember that these are means and not ends. President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) said, “The most important knowledge in the world is gospel knowledge.”² Along with having individual study time, a husband and father can have a profoundly rewarding experience reading the scriptures with his family—for the benefit of all.

Work on improving himself first. The Lord taught, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:39). A husband and father must first learn to love and govern himself before he can do so with others. Once he learns to love Heavenly Father and himself, he tends to become more confident in loving others, especially his spouse and children.

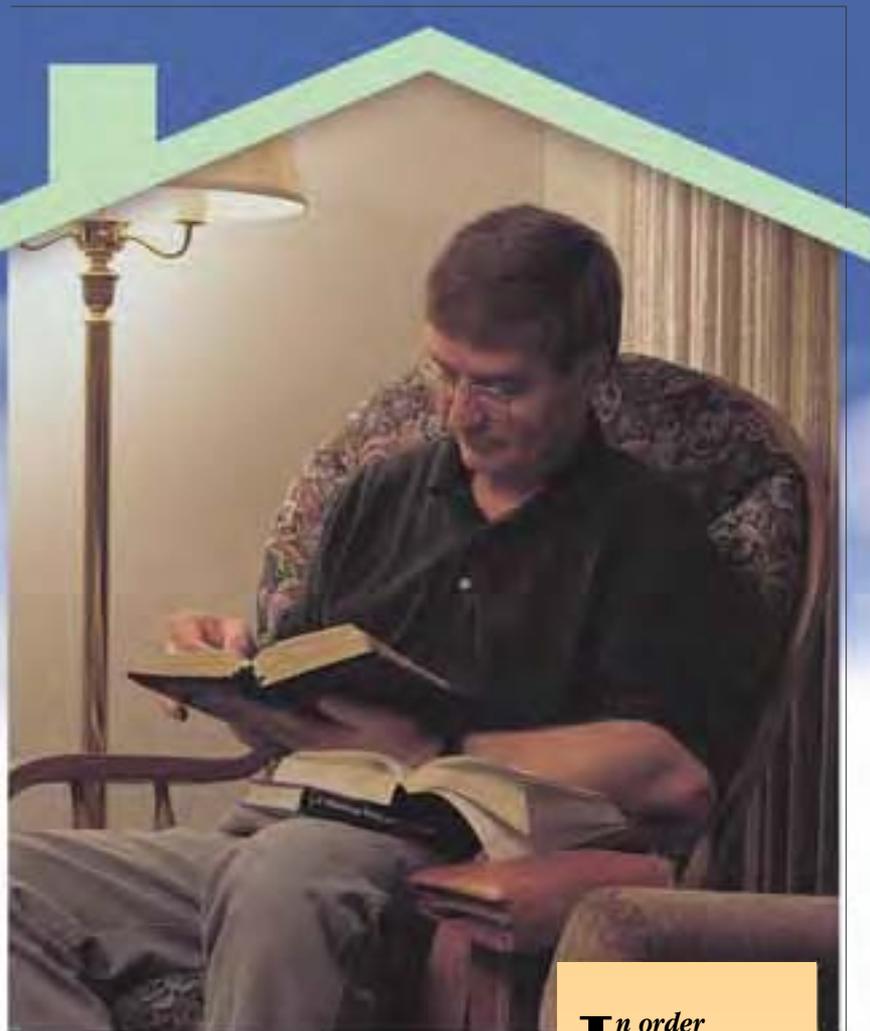
He must learn why it is important to govern wisely. He must learn to control his emotions and appetites and *never abuse anyone*. Violence, cruel behavior, and sharp words wound others. As the Apostle Paul wrote, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25).

Acknowledge each other’s roles and work together. Men and women are equal in the sight of God. “In marriage neither the man nor the woman is more important than the other. They are equal partners and should work together to provide for the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs of the family. . . . The father is the patriarch of the family and has important responsibilities that are his alone. He is the priesthood holder and has the duties of priesthood leadership.”³

A worthy man is given the priesthood so he can preside in the home and bless his family. It is the father’s responsibility to gather the family together for family home evening and for family councils. When we join together, we develop greater love for each other as we share our testimonies and experiences. Fathers should also have prayerful, periodic interviews with each of their children. As the father listens with love, both father and child will be richly rewarded.

Exercise the priesthood righteously. The Lord explained how fathers should exercise the priesthood:

“No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only



by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

“By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—

“Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy” (D&C 121:41–43).

If a husband and father truly learns how to love according to the example of the Savior, he becomes confident, has stronger faith, and is inspired. The influence of the Holy Ghost can help him make righteous decisions on how to treat others.

Teach children the important things. A father should teach his children from the scriptures and from his own example. He

In order to preside righteously in the home, a husband and father must first come to know the doctrines and principles of the restored gospel.



As equal partners, “husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children.”

should teach that personal and family prayers are the most powerful communication tools for receiving revelation and for increasing spirituality. Through prayer, we can resolve many concerns and personal problems (see Philippians 4:6–7).

I remember some years ago, our family seemed to be limited to three children as my wife was not able to become pregnant again. She questioned why and started to blame herself. She prayed day after day. Our children noticed her sadness, and they felt sad too.

Finally I called our children together. In council, we decided to have a special prayer. I prayed; then each child prayed in turn. We had a wonderful feeling, and the Spirit of the Lord was there. Our children believed that their mother would have another baby. Approximately 10 months later, our fourth child was born. What joy we felt and what a

testimony that was to my wife and me and our children.

Feeling the Savior’s Peace

We learn in the proclamation on the family that “husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children.”⁴ Fathers are not in this alone. As husbands and wives strive to rear their families in righteousness, those around them will notice. Once when my wife went to a parent and teacher meeting, someone asked how members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints raise their children so well. I am sure many members have had similar experiences. President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: “We can maintain the integrity of our families if we will follow the counsel of our leaders. As we do so, those about us will observe with respect and be led to inquire how it is done.”⁵

May we stop and think, pondering and reflecting on how we are doing in our own families. May peace come to each family member as husbands and fathers preside over their families in love—that same peace promised by the Savior: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). ■

NOTES

1. *Liabona*, Oct. 1998, 24; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
2. “The Most Important Knowledge,” *Ensign*, May 1971, 2.
3. *Gospel Principles* (manual, 1997), 236–37.
4. *Liabona*, Oct. 1998, 24; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
5. “A City Set upon a Hill,” *Tambuli*, Nov. 1990, 8; “A City upon a Hill,” *Ensign*, July 1990, 5.



Our Eternal Choices

As we learn in 2 Nephi 26:27–28, 33, each of Heavenly Father’s children must have the opportunity to choose freely the path of obedience and happiness.

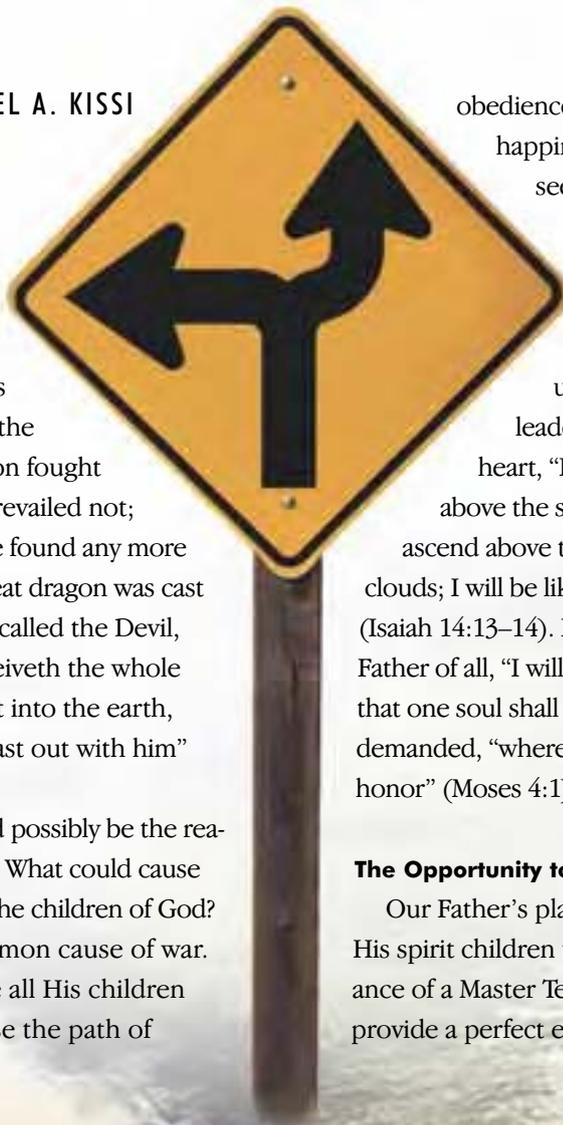
BY ELDER EMMANUEL A. KISSI

Area Authority Seventy
Africa West Area

There was war in heaven, according to the revelation of John. “Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:7–9).

What, we ask, could possibly be the reason for war in heaven? What could cause such hostility among the children of God?

Rebellion is a common cause of war. Heavenly Father gave all His children opportunity to choose the path of



obedience that leads to eternal happiness. But some, it seems, chose the path of self-interest, with no regard for the agency of others. Isaiah teaches us that Lucifer, their leader, had said in his heart, “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:13–14). Lucifer said to the Father of all, “I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost,” and then demanded, “wherefore give me thine honor” (Moses 4:1).

The Opportunity to Choose

Our Father’s plan called for sending His spirit children to earth with the guidance of a Master Teacher who would provide a perfect example they could



The doctrine that all must have the opportunity to know and choose the path of eternal life is repeated throughout the Book of Mormon. This message has been repeated in our day as well.

choose to follow (see Abraham 3:24–28). In agreement with this plan, the Firstborn Son of God said, “Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever” (Moses 4:2). Jesus Christ was chosen to be the teacher, the exemplar, and ultimately the Savior for all humankind as they came to live on earth.

In the war that followed, one-third of our Heavenly Father’s spirit children were cast out with Lucifer. The other two-thirds kept their first estate and thus received the opportunity to progress by following the plan of salvation. These are they to whom the Lord said, through Adam and Eve, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28).

Unfortunately, some of Heavenly Father’s children who come to earth lose the ongoing war with Satan in mortality. Others continue to follow Jesus Christ and prevail over the evil one. But it is our Father’s will that all have the opportunity to make this choice, and all are rewarded according to the way they use their agency. “Behold, the Lord esteemeth all flesh in one; he that is righteous is favored of God,” Nephi wrote. But he added that when people have rejected every word of God and they are ripe in iniquity, they are ready to feel “the fulness of the wrath of God . . . upon them” (1 Nephi 17:35).

Reaching All His Children

What of those who have not heard the word of God in this life? Is there hope for them?

Yes. In His infinite love and mercy, Heavenly Father provided a way that all His children may know His doctrine and choose to follow Him. The psalmist wrote prophetically that everyone would have the opportunity to believe and be saved: “The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God” (Psalm 98:2–3).

The resurrected Lord Jesus Christ told His Apostles: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:15–16). Through an instructive vision given to His Apostle Peter, the Lord made it clear that the good news of the gospel was not to be withheld from any of Heavenly Father’s children (see Acts 10:9–16). “Of a truth

I perceive that God is no respecter of persons,” Peter said. “But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34–35).

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) saw in vision that those who die without having the opportunity to hear the gospel in this life will have the gospel preached to them in the spirit world. There they will be taught all “principles of the gospel that [are] necessary for them to know in order to qualify themselves that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit” (D&C 138:34).

Other Witnesses

This doctrine that all must have the opportunity to know and choose the path of salvation and eternal life is repeated throughout the Book of Mormon. For example: “He hath given [salvation] free for all men. . . . All men are privileged the one like unto the other, and none are forbidden. . . . And he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile” (2 Nephi 26:27–28, 33).

Those who “shouted for joy” in the premortal council when they learned of our Father’s plan will once more have the opportunity to rejoice when they receive the gospel through the power of God and His Son, Jesus Christ.



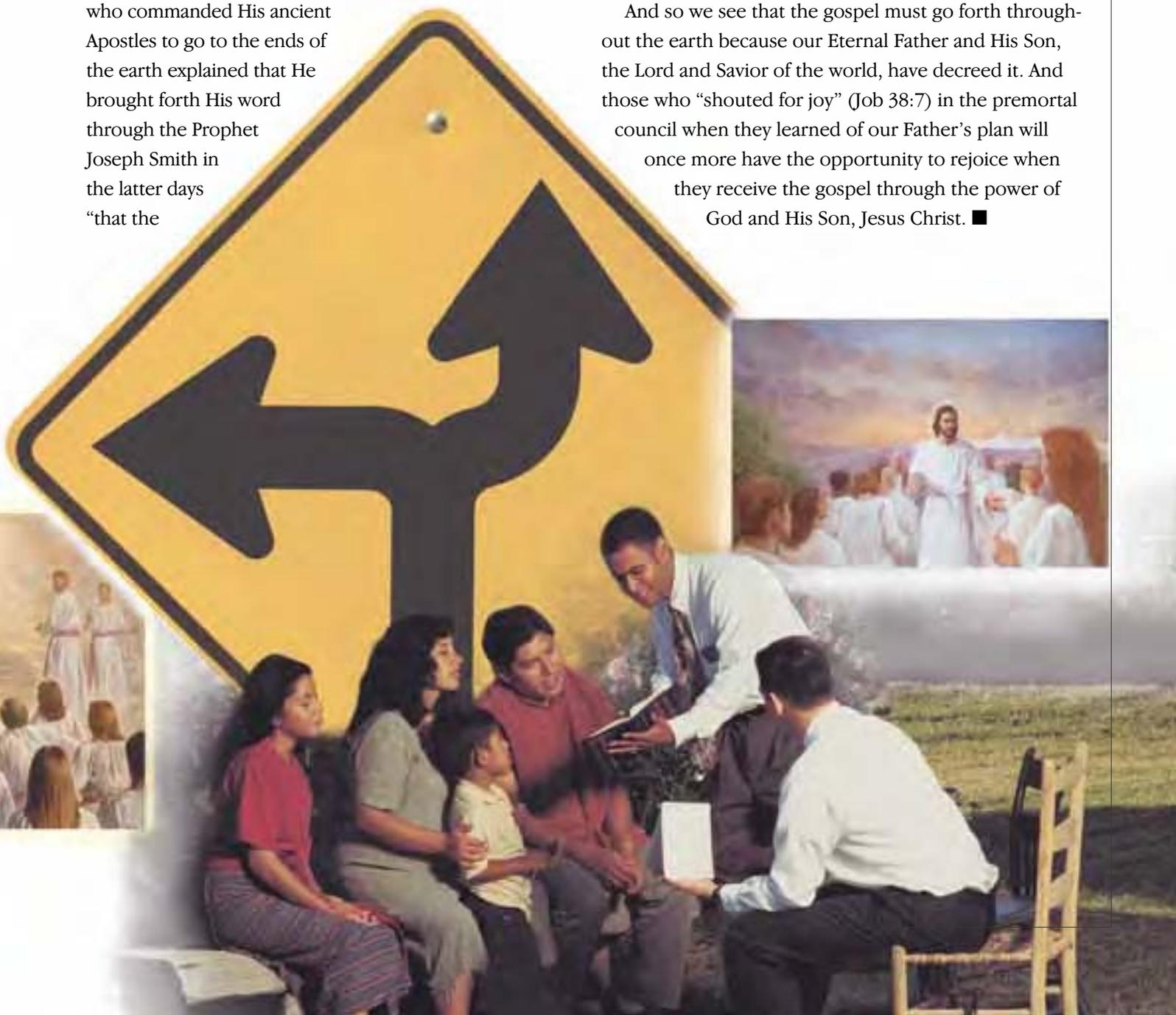
And again: “We see that his arm is extended to all people who will repent and believe on his name” (Alma 19:36), Mormon taught. “Now my brethren, we see that God is mindful of every people, whatsoever land they may be in; yea, he numbereth his people, and his bowels of mercy are over all the earth. Now this is my joy” (Alma 26:37), Ammon explained.

This message has been repeated in our day as well: “The voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth, that all that will hear may hear” (D&C 1:11). That same Lord who commanded His ancient Apostles to go to the ends of the earth explained that He brought forth His word through the Prophet Joseph Smith in the latter days “that the

fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers” (v. 23).

Those who might hear His word are warned not to take it lightly but to forsake sin and serve Him: “He that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven; . . . And again, verily I say unto you, O inhabitants of the earth: I the Lord am willing to make these things known unto all flesh; For I am no respecter of persons” (vv. 32, 34–35).

And so we see that the gospel must go forth throughout the earth because our Eternal Father and His Son, the Lord and Savior of the world, have decreed it. And those who “shouted for joy” (Job 38:7) in the premortal council when they learned of our Father’s plan will once more have the opportunity to rejoice when they receive the gospel through the power of God and His Son, Jesus Christ. ■



Deep in the Mountains

BY HUGO MIZA

My family belongs to a Mayan tribe, the Cakchiquel. Deep in the mountains near San Juan Comalapa in southern Guatemala, life is not easy. Men go to the fields and work all day in their plantations, growing corn and beans. Women prepare lunch and dinner; then they take the meals to their husbands in the fields. After a day of heavy work and a long walk back home, most of the men and some of the women drink alcohol and soon fall asleep. The next day, the routine takes place again.

In my tribe, life expectancy for a man is 48 years. The everyday hard work—in combination with poor nutrition and alcohol—wears out their physical energies. The women bear many children, but half or more of those children die in infancy. Childbearing, hard work, poor nutrition, and sometimes alcohol consumption diminish the life expectancy of the women in my tribe.

Because of the difficulties we faced, my mom wanted a better life for her children and often prayed for help.

Right: Missionaries teach the gospel in Guatemala in the 1970s.

My mother believed that the visit of two missionaries to our remote village in Guatemala was an answer to her prayers.



Missionaries and Tortillas

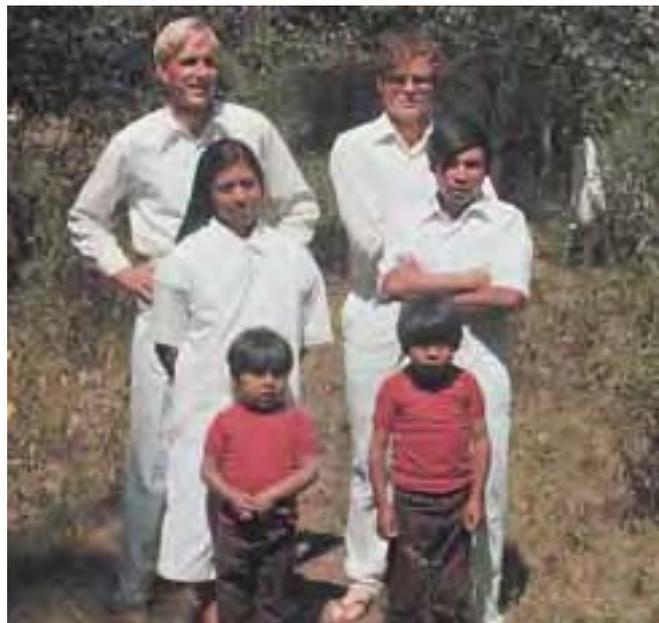
Our circumstances didn't change until a miracle took place in our lives. I was only a young boy when the missionaries came to our village, but I remember everything. My mom, dad, brother, and I were eating lunch in our field. I can still remember the smell of the tortillas on the fire as two white men with light hair made their way through the field. My eyes opened wide in surprise, and I held onto my mom, ready to kick the men if it became necessary to defend ourselves. However, when the men asked, "Would it be OK if we warmed up our tortillas in your fire?" peace came over me. Curiosity filled my head. Why was their accent so funny? Why did they wear white shirts and neckties? Why were they so big?

"Sure, you can warm up your tortillas in our fire," my dad replied. I don't know how it happened, but the next thing I knew, the missionaries were showing us illustrations of the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove. My mom was shocked! She had always believed that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ were beings we could talk to and ask questions of, but she had never heard anyone teach that. While listening to the story of the First Vision, my mom received confirmation from the Holy Ghost that it was true. The visit of these two missionaries was the answer to her prayers. My mom invited them to drop by our house any day.

Later when the missionaries visited us and taught us about the Word of Wisdom, my mom was the happiest I have ever seen her. My dad is a slightly different story. I remember that he was trying to smile, but his eyes were watery, his forehead was white, and the rest of his face was red.

In our tribe, you stick with the traditions—no matter what. Changing religions is viewed as an act of desertion. Friends leave you and relatives look down on you, especially if you are the first one to change.

My mom was surprised that the missionaries took so long to ask, "Will you be baptized into the Church?" She was ready. My dad felt in his heart that the message brought by the missionaries was true, but he was concerned about the consequences that would come to our



Above: The Miza family with the missionaries on Brother and Sister Miza's baptism day. Lower right: Brother and Sister Miza with a young son a few years after joining the Church. Top right: Hugo Miza as a university student.

family if we went against the traditions of our tribe. He needed more time to make up his mind.

In the end, my dad went against everything he had known and chose the gospel. His friends left him. Our relatives told him he was crazy and asked how much money the missionaries paid him to get baptized. No one invited us to parties anymore. My family's social life was gone for a while. These changes were some of the hardest my family ever had to make.

Life as Latter-day Saints

The gospel of Jesus Christ brought a mighty change into my family, for which I am grateful. My dad dedicated more time to our family. My mom cooked better meals. My parents now spent our income wisely. We even had the chance to attend elementary school. My dad said something to us that I will never forget: "From this point on, you will never quit until you get a degree from school."

We were a different family. Family home evening became a time when we set personal and family goals. My dad prepared gospel lessons and shared his life experiences with us, something he had never done before. We children knew our parents loved us. Alcohol was no longer in our home. The fights between my mom and dad turned

into discussions in which they tried to understand each other. Somehow we seemed to be materially rich, although we were actually poor. We were a happy family, and eventually my dad was respected for his new way of life. People trusted him because he did not drink anymore. His friends began to come to him for advice, and somehow whoever associated with my dad started to prosper. Gospel living was contagious. My dad even organized a group of farmers to learn new and better methods of farming.

Loving the Book of Mormon

As a child, I started my religious reading with the Bible, but the Old Testament was too hard for me to read and understand at that young age. My next attempt was the Book of Mormon. After reading a couple of pages, I could not put the book away. Nephi became my new hero. Each day, after some hours of school and many hours of work on the farm, I went back to reading the Book of Mormon. As I read, I felt a special connection between the people of the Book of Mormon and my tribe. I felt the Book of Mormon explained where our Cakchiquel tribe came from and who our ancestors were.

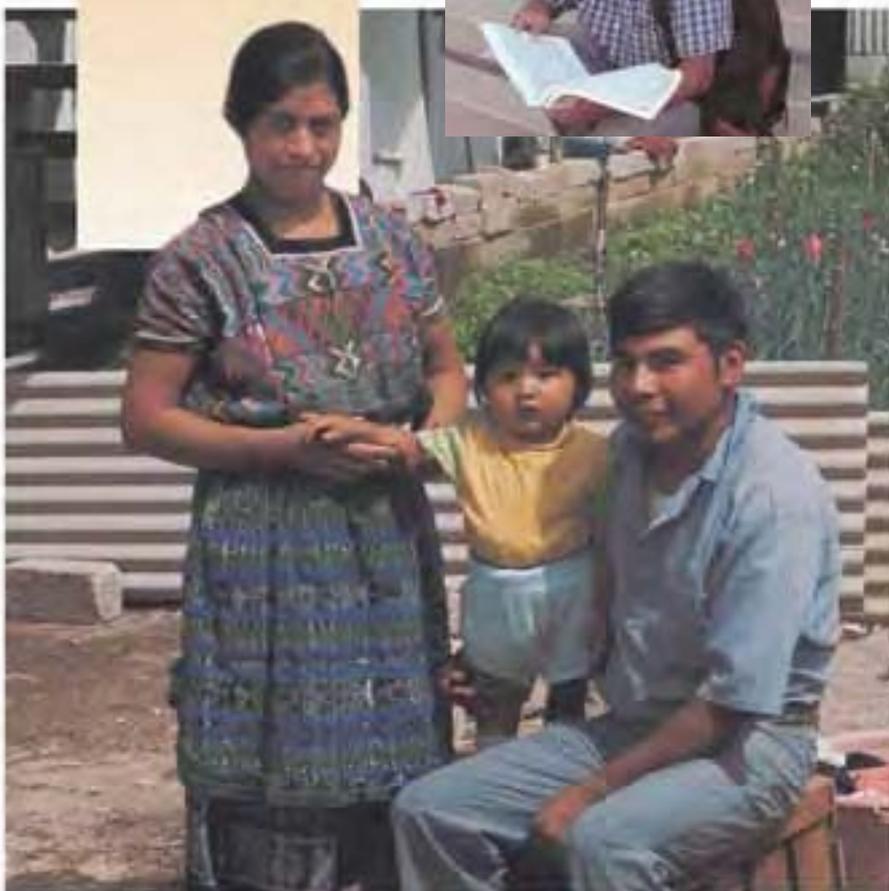
In my reading of the Book of Mormon and learning about the true gospel of Jesus Christ, I felt that I was part of the fulfillment of the promises God made to Lehi, Nephi, and other Book of Mormon prophets about their children being preserved. I'm eternally grateful to those faithful people in the Book of Mormon and to the missionaries who introduced us to the book that changed the course of our lives.

My family eventually moved to Guatemala City. My parents have served in our ward there for many years. My two brothers and two sisters and I are all faithful Latter-day Saints. My brothers and I served full-time missions. My brother, sister, and I are studying at a university.

My family's conversion story reflects God's love and mercy for His children. I am thankful for the love He has for His children wherever they are—even deep in the mountains of Guatemala. ■

Hugo Miza is a member of the Provo 33rd (Spanish) Ward, Provo Utah East Stake.

In our tribe, changing religions is viewed as an act of desertion, but my dad went against everything and chose the gospel. Through the Church's teachings, we became a happy family.



A Voice of
Gladness



After the practice of baptism for the dead was restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Nauvoo Saints rejoiced as they were baptized for their deceased loved ones.

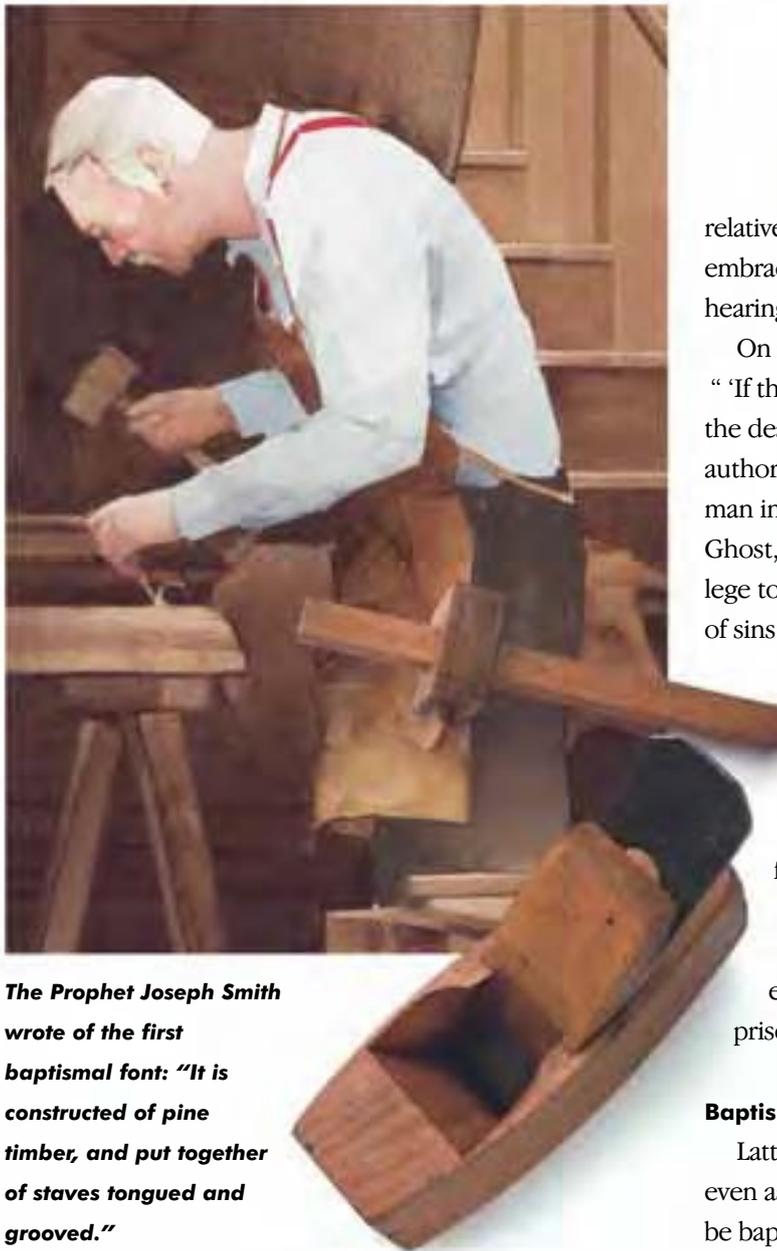
BY SUSAN EASTON BLACK

Charlotte Haven, a visitor to Nauvoo in 1843, walked along the bank of the Mississippi River with a friend. “We followed the bank toward town,” she wrote of the stroll, “and rounding a little point covered with willows and cottonwoods, we spied quite a crowd of people, and soon perceived there was a baptism. Two elders stood knee-deep in the icy water, and immersed one after another as fast as they could come down the bank. We soon observed that some of them went in and were plunged several times. We were told that they were baptized for the dead who had not had the opportunity of adopting the doctrines of the Latter Day Saints.”¹

Such sights were commonplace in Nauvoo between August 1840 and January 1845, as baptism for the dead became a major religious activity. The Prophet Joseph Smith had alluded to the doctrine of baptism for the dead in 1836 and 1838, but in 1840 he put the practice in place. The occasion was the 15 August funeral of Seymour

Brunson, a high councilor and bodyguard of the Prophet. At the burial ground located on the bluff overlooking Nauvoo, mourners listened as the Prophet eulogized his bodyguard.

Although his statements were grand, it was the Prophet’s announcement of the doctrine of baptism for the dead that captured the imagination of the Saints. According to Simon Baker, the Prophet read 1 Corinthians 15 and acknowledged that the Apostle Paul was “talking to a people who understood baptism for the dead, for it was practiced among them.” Then, seeing among those assembled at the burial ground a widow whose son had died without baptism, the Prophet added, “This widow [has read] the sayings of Jesus ‘except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven,’ [see John 3:5] and that not one jot nor tittle of the Savior’s words should pass away, but all should be fulfilled” (see Matthew 5:18). He announced that the fulfillment of the Savior’s teaching had arrived and “that the plan of



The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote of the first baptismal font: “It is constructed of pine timber, and put together of staves tongued and grooved.”

salvation was calculated to save all who were willing to obey the requirements of the law of God.”²

A Joyful Season

Elder Heber C. Kimball wrote of his wife’s reaction to the new doctrine: “A more joyfull Season She . . . never Saw be fore on the account of the glory that Joseph set forth.”³ Soon Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo were wading knee-deep into the Mississippi River to be baptized as proxy for their deceased kindred and friends (see D&C 127–28).

The Prophet Joseph continued to receive revelations that clarified this glorious doctrine. He said, “The Saints have the privilege of being baptized for those of their

relatives who are dead, whom they believe would have embraced the Gospel, if they had been privileged with hearing it, and who have received the Gospel in the spirit.”⁴

On another occasion, the Prophet asked his followers, “‘If the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized for the dead?’ [see 1 Corinthians 15:29]. . . . If we can, by the authority of the Priesthood of the Son of God, baptize a man in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, for the remission of sins, it is just as much our privilege to act as an agent, and be baptized for the remission of sins for and in behalf of our dead kindred.”⁵

Most memorable were the Prophet Joseph’s words: “Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free” (D&C 128:22).

Baptisms in the Mississippi

Latter-day Saints from Nauvoo to Quincy, Illinois, and even as far away as Kirtland, Ohio, entered river waters to be baptized as proxy for departed loved ones. Elder Wilford Woodruff wrote of one occasion: “Joseph Smith himself . . . went into the Mississippi river one Sunday night after meeting, and baptized a hundred. I baptized another hundred. The next man, a few rods from me, baptized another hundred. We were strung up and down the Mississippi, baptizing for our dead.”⁶

“Why did we do it?” Elder Woodruff asked. “Because of the feeling of joy that we had, to think that we in the flesh could stand and redeem our dead.”⁷

Among those entering baptismal waters in these early years was William Clayton: “I was baptized first for myself and then for my grandfather Thomas and grandmother Elen Clayton, Grandmother Mary Chritebly and aunt Elizabeth Beurchwood.”⁸ Although he and others would

question the lack of structured organization of these first baptisms, for the practice varied up and down the river and few recorded the events of the day, joy overcame any sense of neglect to properly regulate the ordinance. “We attended to this ordinance without waiting to have a proper record made,” said Elder Woodruff. He lamented, “Of course, we had to do the work over again. Nevertheless, that does not say the work was not of God.”⁹

Latter-day Saints eagerly accepted their responsibility to seek after their kindred dead and sent a flurry of letters to distant relatives asking for genealogical information. Jonah Ball wrote: “I want you to send me a list of fathers relations his parents & Uncles & their names, also Mothers. I am determined to do all I can to redeem those I am permitted to.”¹⁰ Sally Carlisle Randall asked a relative to “write me the given names of all our connections that are dead as far back as grandfathers and grandmothers at any rate.” She then added, “I expect you will think this [baptism for the dead] is strange doctrine but you will find it is true.”¹¹

Jonah Ball and Sally Randall knew of the important work for the dead, and they were eager to be proxies for loved ones in the Mississippi River. But it would not be long for them and others until the season of baptizing in the river ended. “God decreed before the foundation of the world that that ordinance should be administered in a font prepared for that purpose in the house of the Lord,” the Prophet Joseph explained.¹² Then on 3 October 1841 he declared, “There shall be no more baptisms for the dead, until the ordinance can be attended to in the Lord’s House.”¹³

A Baptismal Font of Wood

After approximately 13 months (15 August 1840 to 3 October 1841), baptisms for the dead in the river halted

while William Weeks, architect of the Nauvoo Temple, prepared drawings for a baptismal font for the Nauvoo Temple. Weeks drew 12 oxen shouldering a molten sea, symbolic of the encampment of the twelve tribes of Israel encircling the tabernacle during the days of Moses.

Soon work began, and when the font was finished, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote a detailed description of it:

“The baptismal font is situated in the center of the basement room, under the main hall of the Temple; it is con-



“Joseph Smith himself. . . went into the Mississippi river one Sunday night after meeting, and baptized a hundred. I baptized another hundred. The next man, a few rods from me, baptized another hundred. We were strung up and down the Mississippi, baptizing for our dead.”

Elder Wilford Woodruff

structed of pine timber, and put together of staves tongued and grooved, oval shaped, sixteen feet long east and west, and twelve feet wide, seven feet high from the foundation, the basin four feet deep, the moulding of the cap and base are formed of beautiful carved wood in antique style. The sides are finished with panel work. A flight of stairs in the north and south sides lead up and down into the basin, guarded by side railing.

“The font stands upon twelve oxen, four on each side, and two at each end, their heads, shoulders, and fore legs projecting out from under the font; they are carved out of pine plank, glued together, and copied after the most beautiful five-year-old steer that could be found in the country, and they are an excellent striking likeness of the original; the horns were formed after the most perfect horn that could be procured.”¹⁴

Acknowledging the many curious speculations about the font that appeared in newspapers from Missouri to New York, the Prophet commented to Brigham Young, “This fount has caused the Gentile world to wonder.”¹⁵ Yet for little children, the font was not a wonder but was wonderful. Abigail Morman recalled a childhood memory: “The Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum lifted my sister Cynthia and myself up on the oxen which held up the fount, this pleased us very much and we thought it the



The Saints finished the stone font in January 1846 but did not use it because of the urgency for them to leave Nauvoo.

most wonderful place we had ever seen.”¹⁶ But for adult Latter-day Saints, adulations were subdued, for they were inclined to speak in reverent whispers of the opportunities that awaited them in continuing their work of baptism for kindred dead. They knew that the wooden font was in its place on Temple Hill, water for the font was channeled from a nearby well, and the temporary frame walls and a roof were protecting the structure from gaping eyes. To them it was time again to resume their important work.

A Proper Record Made

On 8 November 1841, the Prophet Joseph Smith dedicated the baptismal font, and on Sunday, 21 November 1841, baptisms were performed there. Acting as officiators were Elders Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and John Taylor. They baptized about 40 people in the presence of the Twelve, who had assembled to witness the ordinances.

Modern historian M. Guy Bishop counted 6,818 baptismal ordinances completed in 1841 in the river and the wooden font.¹⁷ From this record, it is clear that the font was in continual use that year. However, the religious activity is greater than noted. The statistics do not reflect those who were baptized for the dead but failed to have their proxy work recorded. In their enthusiasm to complete the ordinances, these Saints failed to heed the Lord’s directive,

“Let all the records be had in order, that they may be put in the archives of my holy temple, to be held in remembrance from generation to generation, saith the Lord of Hosts” (D&C 127:9). The Prophet admonished the Saints, “All persons baptized for the dead must have a recorder present, that he may be an eyewitness to record and testify of the truth and validity of his record.”¹⁸

Even after this injunction, problems of recording baptismal work were still apparent. The wooden font on Temple Hill was in such demand that adult converts and children who had reached the age of eight years sought other locations in which to continue their baptismal work. They may have rationalized that the crowded font and the possibility of interfering with the manual labor on the temple opened the way for them to once again do baptismal work in the Mississippi River. On Monday, 30 May 1842, Elder Woodruff wrote of being baptized for the dead in the river under the hands of Elder George Albert Smith and added, “I also Baptized [Brother] John Benbow for six of his dead kindred [and his wife] for six of her dead friends.”¹⁹

So frequent were river baptisms that William Marks, president of the Nauvoo Stake, convened a conference for the purpose of appointing recorders for baptisms for the dead wherever they occurred. Additional records still lacked proper recording, but this did not stop the Latter-day Saints from wading into the Mississippi. It was not until the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum on 27 June 1844 that river baptisms stopped. As the Saints mourned this loss, even the wooden font on Temple Hill was not used.

Not until President Brigham Young returned to Nauvoo in August 1844 was the question of resuming this great work for the dead raised. President Young replied that he “had no counsel to give upon that subject at present, but thought it best to attend to other matters in the meantime.”²⁰ Other Apostles, however, began to resume the practice. On the afternoon of 24 August 1844, “several of the Twelve Apostles were baptized for their dead” in the font.²¹ A short time later, President Young told the Saints they could resume baptisms for their dead relatives.²² The

work continued until January 1845. By this time 15,722 recorded baptisms for the dead had been performed.

The Stone Font

In January 1845, the wooden font was removed from the Nauvoo Temple site. On 6 April 1845, President Young announced the need for a new font: “This font was made of wood, and was only intended for the present use; but it is now removed, and as soon as the stone cutters get through with the cutting of the stone for the walls of the Temple, they will immediately proceed to cut the stone for and erect a font of hewn stone. This font will be of an oval form and twelve feet in length and eight wide, with stone steps and an iron railing; this font will stand upon twelve oxen, which will be cast of iron or brass, or perhaps hewn stone.”²³



“If we can, by the authority of the Priesthood of the Son of God, baptize a man in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, for the remission of sins, it is just as much our privilege to act as an agent, and be baptized for the remission of sins for and in behalf of our dead kindred.”

Joseph Smith

Stonecutters laid the first stone for the new font on 25 June 1845 after they finished their daily work on the temple. Through their combined labors, they erected a font that resembled the discarded wooden structure but with more intricate details. For example, their cutting of the stone oxen was “perfectly executed, so that the veins in the ears and nose were plainly seen.” The “horns were perfectly natural, with small wrinkles at the bottom.”²⁴ And the stone oxen were painted white and appeared to be standing in water halfway up to their knees.

A Change of Emphasis

By January 1846, the stone font was finished. However, a question remains as to who used the font and whether baptisms for the dead were actually performed there. If baptisms were not performed in the stone font, then the question should be asked, “Why did the Saints not continue with this important work?” The answer is not found in neglect but in a change of emphasis. The Saints had turned their energy to

receiving their endowments in the upper story of the Nauvoo Temple and making preparations for the trek west. Perhaps stonecutter Joseph Hovey described it best on 1

December 1845: “I finished my work on the baptismal font and made an agreement to . . . put up a shop and go to work ironing wagons.”²⁵

The great work for the dead stopped in Nauvoo in 1845. Only faded holographic baptismal records remain to tell of the unselfish deeds of the early Saints in behalf of their deceased loved ones. Saints of today should express gratitude for the deeds of the early Saints and for the records that reveal the first “ordination remembrances” in behalf of the deceased in this dispensation. ■

Susan Easton Black is a member of the Pleasant View First Ward, Provo Utah Sharon East Stake.

NOTES

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10. Letter to relatives, 19 May 1843, Church Archives.
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President Boyd K. Packer

Apostle and Artist



Ever since his childhood in the farming community of Brigham City, Utah, President Boyd K. Packer has had a love of nature and art. Of particular interest to him have been birds and animals. In high school, he had ambitions to become an artist, but World War II led him in another direction. After serving as a pilot in the Pacific, he returned home and turned his attention to college, marriage, and teaching seminary.

Today he serves as Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He and his wife, Donna Smith Packer,

are the parents of 10 children, and take delight in their grandchildren. But throughout his life, President Packer has pursued his love of art through his carvings of birds and paintings of rural Utah.



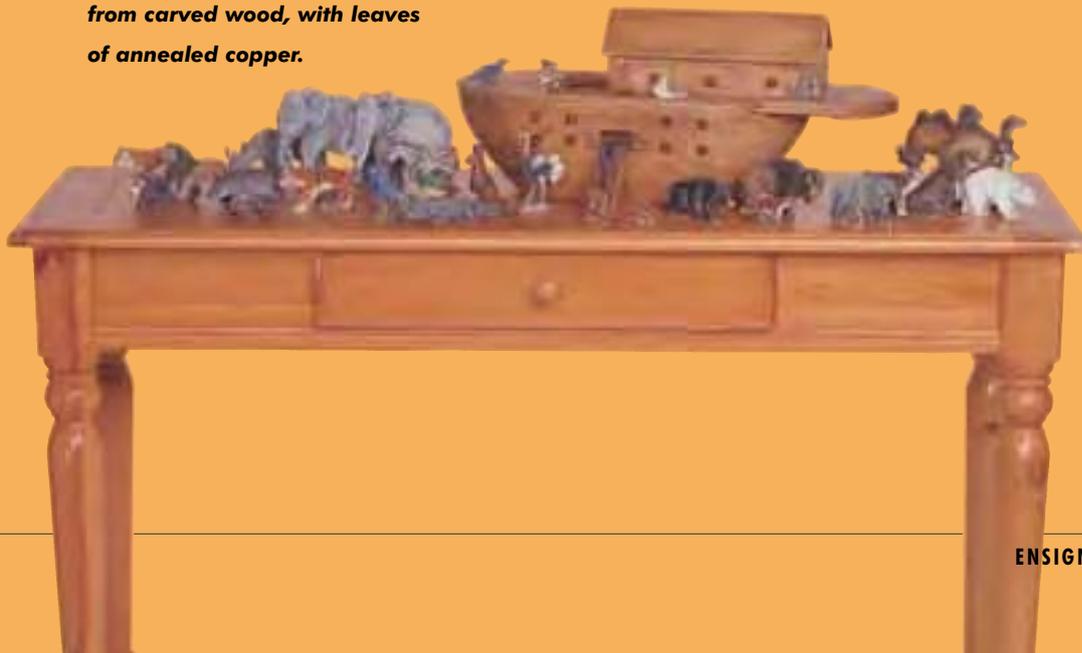
Following are some of the images of his artwork currently featured in an exhibit at the Museum of Church History and Art entitled "Boyd K. Packer: The Lifework of an Amateur Artist." The exhibit will be open through 6 September 2004 and can be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.lds.org/museum/exhibits/packer>. ■





Inset top left: Savior in Gethsemane (after a Heinrich Hoffman painting). Inset bottom left: President Packer relaxing with his carving. Left background: Lazuli Buntings, Iris Flower, created from carved wood, with leaves of annealed copper.

Above: In the painting Bishop's Team, President Packer pays tribute to the dedication of bishops in the Church. Below: Noah's Ark is a favorite toy of the Packer grandchildren. If an animal breaks, President Packer glues it back together.







Left: Blue Jay, Norway Maple Leaves, created from carved wood and annealed copper. Above: Peacocks and Autumn Leaves is a reminder of President Packer's love of the peacocks he once kept.

Below: The Packer family worked together for two years to carve this mantel with sego lilies and covered wagons, exhibited as a full-size replica.





I Won't Give Up on Them!

How could I maintain a close, loving relationship with my children when they had rejected the standards of the Church?

NAME WITHHELD

As a young woman, I was an achiever—a straight-A student, product of a strong Latter-day Saint family. I suppose I saw myself as a valiant spirit on the fast track to the celestial kingdom.

But after I married and had children, divorce temporarily derailed my journey. Now, instead of speeding along smoothly toward success, I have spent years painstakingly trying to rebuild my track one tie, one step, at a time.

In the aftermath of divorce, I took comfort in the fact that my children were young and innocent. I expected their pure hearts to recognize and cling to goodness. I naively thought the choice between their father's immoral, apostate lifestyle and my gospel-centered lifestyle would be easy for them. I was devastated as one by one, three of my four children turned their backs on the Church.

Now adults, they are still loving. They work hard at honoring me and letting me know that they care. They are responsible, productive people who manifest the basic values of Christian charity and honesty. But they have made their emotional and intellectual home in a culture that is foreign to me.

Without question we love each other, but sometimes finding common ground is difficult. I go back and forth with my feelings—missing them and wanting to be a part of their lives, yet being relieved at not always having to participate in their lives. It is painful to remember the dreams I used to have for them. But I don't want to torture them or me with my disappointment, so I work hard at living my life in the present instead of the past.

Longing to Help

I feel torn between trying to love my children as they are and wanting desperately to help them change.



In 3 Nephi 18, Jesus was about to leave the Nephites after sharing experiences so powerful they defied description. He gave them one final instruction, knowing the sweetness of that moment would not last indefinitely. He taught them how to treat those of their congregations who may not be worthy, the ones who have fallen away, like my children and perhaps some of yours. He said:

“If he [the wayward soul] repent not he shall not be numbered among my people, that he may not destroy my people, for behold I know my sheep, and they are numbered.

“Nevertheless, ye shall not cast him out of your synagogues, or your places of worship, for unto such shall ye continue to minister; for ye know not but what they will return and repent, and come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I shall heal them; and ye shall be the means of bringing salvation unto them” (vv. 31–32).

Emotionally, I am struck by the force with which Jesus instructed the Nephites regarding these wayward souls, both in terms of condemning their behavior and in terms of ministering to them. His counsel highlights the contradiction I feel as I interact with three of my children. When I visit them, am I polluting myself by spending time in “Babylon”? Do I give them a false message of approval by sharing parts of their questionable lifestyle? Or am I ministering to them? What meaning does 3 Nephi 18 have for *me*?

Maintaining My Standards

The last time I visited one of my daughters, I declined her invitation to go to an amusement park on Sunday. Instead, I attended sacrament meeting in the local chapel. It felt strange to be attending church in my daughter’s neighborhood—in what should be her ward—participating



in an experience now foreign to her. I sat there with her neighbors, realizing that the way she dresses and behaves is probably offensive to them; these members of my church would see my daughter as foreign. They would look at her walking down the street or drinking with her female partner, and they would feel uncomfortable. It probably would not occur to them that she was raised in Utah, a descendant of Latter-day Saint pioneers.

I was sympathetic with their probable discomfort. But there was also a voice inside me that was crying out to these people, my daughter's neighbors, to recognize her as a daughter of God and to minister to her. This was a testimony meeting, and I could not restrain myself from speaking to the congregation. As nearly as I can reconstruct them, these are the thoughts I shared:

"Brothers and Sisters, I am here visiting my daughter, who should be a member of

Christ's counsel highlights the contradiction I feel as I interact with three of my children. When I visit them, am I polluting myself by spending time in "Babylon"? Or am I ministering to them? What meaning does 3 Nephi 18 have for me?

your ward but has not been inside a chapel for many years. In fact, three of my four children have fallen away from the Church. I want to apologize to you good people on behalf of my children. I suspect that you may have seen them as you walked down these streets, and I am sorry if their behavior has offended you.

"But let me leave you with an additional thought. The next time you are confronted with someone in your neighborhood whose appearance or behavior is offensive to you, remember that person has a mother, and it might be me. So thank you in advance for not judging and for remembering that this child of mine is also a child of God."

I think my comments were a synthesis of my struggles for many years in going back and forth between verses 31 and 32 of 3 Nephi 18. That balancing act pretty much sums up my life.

I used to think my faith alone would be sufficient to bring my children back. I wanted to be like Alma the elder; because of his prayers, an angel appeared and changed his son's life in a dramatic, miraculous way (see Mosiah 27:10–16). I thought that if I could just exercise enough faith, I could call down a miracle from heaven on behalf of my ex-husband and, later, my children. But to now, it has not been so.

Three Lessons

My heart was broken by the decisions of my children, and in a very real sense my life fell apart. But I want to share three lessons I learned as a result. Perhaps the best way to elaborate on these lessons is in the context of the fourth article of faith, which identifies the first principle of the gospel as "faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." I discovered that *faith* and *faith in the Lord Jesus Christ* mean different



things to me. I used to think of faith as the power to accomplish anything—to move mountains, walk on water, and certainly to bring my children back to the fold. But *faith*, no matter how powerful, will not take away agency. When I face my disappointments, however, *faith in the Lord Jesus Christ* allows me to acknowledge His mercy and longsuffering as those gifts relate to both my children and myself.

Lesson number one was the realization that I cannot change others; I can only change myself. As I have matured in facing the lifelong challenge with independent children, I find that my prayers are different than they used to be. I used to try to exercise faith by saying, “Heavenly Father, please help my children to change. Help them to become aware of the harmful effects of alcohol or sexual promiscuity, and help them to recognize the truths of the gospel.” But now I am more likely to exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by saying, “Heavenly Father, I know Thou lovest my children. Help me to feel about them the same way Thou dost. Help me to love them better. Help me to understand Thy plan as it applies to them. And help me to be patient.”

Lesson number two, for me, was that becoming completely stripped of pride freed me to make spiritual progress. It was humiliating when I divorced to go from being a strong member of the ward to someone who suddenly needed help. I was embarrassed when people learned that my 14-year-old daughter had elected to live with her father, who had chosen a homosexual lifestyle, instead of with me. (What was I doing wrong? I was a good mother. I paid tithing, fasted and prayed, attended the temple. What more could I do?) Later, it was even more embarrassing to admit that my daughter had chosen her father’s lifestyle for her own.

But as I learned more about exercising faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, my broken heart became not a crushed heart but a “broken heart and a contrite spirit” (see D&C 59:8), a heart broken open to receive help, guidance, and

wisdom. I was open to learn, to grow, and to change; pride was no longer a barrier. During that time when my heart was so tender, I couldn’t sit through a sacrament meeting without weeping. People saw my tears and felt sorry for me, but those tears were more than tears of grief. I was overwhelmed with many feelings—including feelings of gratitude, joy, and love. The Lord was aware of my plight, and His grace was at work in my heart.

Lesson number three was that Christ will never stop loving His Father’s children, and neither should I. Loving my children will never be inappropriate, no matter what they may have done to cut themselves off from the Church. I take comfort in reading any scripture that helps me understand the profound love Christ has for



all of His Father’s children. One of my favorites is found in Isaiah 49:15–16:

“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

“Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.”

While Christ hung on the cross, I feel He was engraving the image, the names, of my children and me in the palms of His hands.

Faith is a belief that through fasting and prayer all things are possible—even a change of heart in our children so that they will repent and return to the Church. For me, the additional dimension of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is trusting in the reality and the power of Christ’s love for all God’s children regardless of our mistakes. Faith in Christ is knowing that His Atonement makes repentance possible.

I don’t know what will be required of my children, to what extent they will be held accountable, how painful repentance will be for them—or even how long until they will recognize the need for change. But I do know that my responsibility right now is to love them. I will never quit hoping that my children will again embrace the gospel.

A Responsibility to Love

I am deeply grateful for my testimony of the power of the Atonement. I don’t know what will be required of my children, to what extent they will be held accountable, how painful repentance will be for them—or even how long until they will recognize the need for change. But I do know that my responsibility right now is to love them.

I will never quit hoping that my children will again embrace the gospel. I love to ponder verse 32 of the 18th chapter of 3 Nephi: “For unto such shall ye continue to minister; for ye know not but what they will return and repent, and come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I shall heal them; and ye shall be the means of bringing salvation unto them.” I particularly appreciate the promise “and I shall heal them.”

It has sometimes been difficult for me in testimony meetings to listen to faith-promoting stories about a miraculous healing, a surprising conversion, or a son or daughter who came back to church. I could become cynical if I allowed myself. What about all the righteous people who die tragically? Faith doesn’t always cure. And why does Heavenly Father seem to answer other parents’ prayers and not mine?

But I choose not to be cynical. Instead I rejoice with my brothers and sisters when their prayers are answered, and I accept the fact that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is much more than being able to pray down a miracle from heaven. In the final analysis, such faith is really *faithfulness*. What really matters is that I remain true to the knowledge and testimony I have and that I stay open to the growing and learning process by acknowledging my limitations and seeking divine guidance.



children is to radiate the joy of the gospel by the way I live.

I no longer see myself on the fast track to the celestial kingdom. There is no fast track. When I was skimming along the surface of the straight and narrow path in my youth, I had lofty goals, and I knew success; but I didn't really know Christ until I was confronted with "potholes" in the road. I am sorry my children have left the Church, but I am not sorry for the potholes that have brought me to my knees.

There is no way to get through life unscathed. For each of us, the only track to the celestial kingdom requires a humble recognition of our dependence on the atoning sacrifice of the Savior Jesus Christ. We must recognize the love of our Heavenly Father and develop an unwavering commitment to keep His commandments.

I will continue to exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by loving Him, loving my children, and striving to be an example of the gospel as the true plan of happiness. ■

A Responsibility to Know Joy

Along with my decision to avoid cynicism, I have decided not to wallow in guilt and misery. I could torture myself with "if only"—if only I had married someone else, if only I had been a stronger influence when my children were young, if only I had recognized some of their concerns earlier. But "if only" doesn't make any difference now, and berating myself doesn't accomplish anything either. Rather, if I truly believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the plan of happiness, then it is my responsibility to be happy. The best way I can be a missionary to my

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Read the first three paragraphs and ask family members what they would do or how they would feel if this were to happen to them. Read the second section, "Longing to Help," and discuss the words and phrases of 3 Nephi 18:31–32. How can we show tolerance and love for those who believe and live differently from ourselves?

2. Read and discuss the three lessons this sister learned from her experience. Invite family members to use the Topical Guide to find scriptures that relate to each lesson. Bear testimony of the power of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in your life.

The Breaking of the Day Has Found Me on My Knees



BY PRESIDENT SPENCER W. KIMBALL
(1895–1985)

Twelfth President of the Church

Spencer Woolley Kimball was born on 28 March 1895 in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Andrew and Olive Woolley Kimball. When he was three years old, his family moved to the small town of Thatcher, Arizona. After serving in the Central States Mission, he returned to Thatcher, where he met a young schoolteacher named Camilla Eyring. Spencer and Camilla married on 16 November 1917. Nearly 26 years later, while serving as stake president in Safford, Arizona, Spencer was called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and was ordained by President Heber J. Grant on 7 October 1943. Spencer W. Kimball was ordained and set apart as President of the Church on 30 December 1973. President Kimball was a dynamic leader with great vision, presiding over an unprecedented expansion in both missionary work and Church membership. He died on 5 November 1985. This is an excerpt from his first general conference address, delivered on 1 October 1943.

I have been overwhelmed and have felt that I was unable to carry on this great work; that I was unworthy; that I was incapable because of my weaknesses and my limitations. . . . I have been out in the desert and in high mountains alone, apart, and have poured out my soul to God.

This is the great day of my life. I have seen hands raised many times in my life, but never have they meant quite so much as they meant today when you raised your hands to sustain and support me.

The Call

I feel extremely humble in this calling that has come to me. Many people have asked me if I was surprised when it came. That, of course, is a very weak word for this experience. I was completely bewildered and shocked. I did have a premonition that this call was coming, but very brief, however. On the 8th of July, when President [J. Reuben] Clark called me, I was electrified with a strong presentiment that something of this kind was going to happen. As I came home at noon, my boy was answering the telephone, and he said, "Daddy, Salt Lake City is calling."

I had had many calls from Salt Lake City. They hadn't ever worried me like this one. I knew that I had no unfinished business in Salt Lake City, and the thought came over me quickly, "You're going to be called to an important position." Then I hurriedly swept it from my mind, because it seemed so



ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT T. BARRETT

unworthy and so presumptuous, and I had convinced myself that such a thing was impossible by the time that I heard President Clark's voice a thousand miles away saying, "Spencer, this is Brother Clark speaking. The Brethren have just called you to fill one of the vacancies in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles."

Like a bolt of lightning it came. I did a great deal of thinking in the brief moments that I was on the wire. There were quite a number of things said about disposing of my business, moving to headquarters, and other things to be expected of me. I couldn't repeat them all. My mind seemed to be traveling many paths all at once—I was dazed, almost numb with the shock; a picture of my life

spread out before me. It seemed that I could see all of the people before me whom I had injured, or who had fancied that I had injured them, or to whom I had given offense, and all the small petty things of my life. I sensed immediately my inability and limitations, and I cried back, "Not me, Brother Clark! You can't mean that!" I was virtually speechless. My heart pounded fiercely.

I recall two or three years ago, when Brother [Harold B.] Lee was giving his [first] address as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ from this stand, he told us of his experience through the night after he had been notified of his call. I think I now know something about the experience he had. I have been going through it for 12 weeks. I believe the



Clockwise from left: Spencer W. Kimball in 1915 as a missionary in the Central States Mission, in 1936 as district governor of the Rotary Club, and in 1943 as a new member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (standing, second from left).



Blessings from Obeying

I remember when I was called to be a counselor in the stake presidency. I was in my 20s. President [Heber J.] Grant came down to help bury my father, who was the former stake president, and reorganize the stake. I was the stake clerk. I recall that some of my relatives came to President Grant, unknown to me, after I had been chosen, and said, “President Grant, it’s a mistake to call a young man like that to a position of responsibility and make an old man



Brethren were very kind to me in announcing my appointment when they did so that I might make the necessary adjustments in my business affairs, but perhaps they were more inspired to give me the time that I needed of a long period of purification, for in those long days and weeks I did a great deal of thinking and praying, and fasting and praying. There were conflicting thoughts that surged through my mind—seeming voices saying: “You can’t do the work. You are not worthy. You have not the ability”—and always finally came the triumphant thought: “You must do the work assigned—you must make yourself able, worthy, and qualified.” And the battle raged on.

I remember reading that Jacob wrestled all night, “until the breaking of the day” [Genesis 32:24], for a blessing; and I want to tell you that for 85 nights I have gone through that experience, wrestling for a blessing. Eighty-five times, the breaking of the day has found me on my knees praying to the Lord to help me and strengthen me and make me equal to this great responsibility that has come to me. I have not sought positions nor have I been ambitious. Promotions have continued to come faster than I felt I was prepared for them.

of him and tie him down.” Finally, after some discussion, President Grant said very calmly, but firmly, “Well, Spencer has been called to this work, and he can do as he pleases about it,” and, of course, when the call came, I accepted it gladly, and I have received great blessings therefrom.

A few days ago one of my well-to-do clients came to me and said, “Spencer, you’re going away from us?”

“Yes,” I said.

“Well, this is going to ruin you financially,” he continued. “You are just getting started well; your business is prospering. You are making a lot of money now, and the future looks bright yet. I don’t know how you can do this. You don’t have to accept the call, do you?”

And I said, “Brother, we do not have to accept any call, but if you understand the Mormon way of life, those of us who have been reared in the Church and understand the discipline of the Church, we just always do accept such calls.” And I further said to him: “Do you remember what Luke said? ‘For a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth’ (Luke 12:15), and all the bonds, lands, houses, and livestock are just *things* that mean so little in a person’s abundant life.” . . .

Below: President Kimball in 1980 in the Salt Lake Tabernacle. Right: In the 1970s on one of his many journeys as Church President, accompanied by his wife, Camilla; Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, on his left; and Elder Gordon B. Hinckley and his wife, Marjorie, following them.

Comfort in the Scriptures

In these long weeks since July 8th, I can tell you that I have been overwhelmed and have felt that I was unable to carry on this great work; that I was unworthy; that I was incapable because of my weaknesses and my limitations. I have felt many times that I was up against a blank wall. And in that interim I have been out in the desert and in high mountains alone, apart, and have poured out my soul to God. I have taken courage from one or two scriptures which constantly came to my mind and of which people continued to remind me. One was from Paul, and as I felt so foolish, small, and weak, I remembered that he said: "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; . . . that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Corinthians 1:25–29).



When my feeling of incompetence wholly overwhelmed me, I remembered the words of Nephi when he said: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7). I want to tell you that I lean heavily on these promises, that the Lord will strengthen and give me growth and fit and qualify me for this great work. I have seen the Lord qualify men. In my Church experience I have helped to make many bishops. I have seen them grow and prosper and become great



and mighty men in the Church; men who were weak and men who were foolish, and they became strong and confounded the wise, and so I rely upon that promise of the Lord that He will strengthen and empower me that I may be able to do this work to which I have been called.

As I read the scriptures about the Apostles of old, I found them starting out in their ministry with much less strength, and they increased in might and power. I found Paul saying toward the end of his career, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). . . .

Appreciation

I appreciate deeply the unparalleled honor that has come to me. I shall do my utmost to show my appreciation to my Lord and my Brethren by being a faithful servant. I am grateful for the opportunity of working with these honored and great men of the Authorities toward whom I have always had almost a worshipful devotion. I glory in the opportunity to serve the people of this Church, to share their disappointments and sorrows, and their joys and achievements.

I know that this is the Church and kingdom of God. It has been a part of me. Whenever it has prospered, I have gloried in it. When it was criticized, it has hurt me, for it seemed a part of my very being. Every fiber in my body bears witness that this is the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness. I testify to you that this is the work of God, that Jesus is the Christ, our Redeemer, our Master, our Lord, and I bear testimony to you in all sincerity and in deepest humility. ■

Published in Conference Report, Oct. 1943, 15–19; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization modernized.

When I began searching for my family on the Internet, I didn't realize someone was also searching for me.

Net Results

BY KATHY CRAWFORD

I never knew my father nor had I ever seen a picture



of him. All I knew about him was the information on my birth certificate: his name, Wharton Kinsey Gray Jr.; where he was born; his age; and his occupation—salesman. When I was in college, I received a letter from the Social Security Administration informing me that he had died. After that, I felt that the chances of ever finding out anything about him or his ancestors had died with him.

In December 1998 I was baptized and became the only Latter-day Saint in my family. I knew family history was something I was supposed to do, but I didn't know how to proceed. It was several years before I finally learned the names of my paternal grandparents and more about my father—that he had been hospitalized with schizophrenia shortly after I was born.

Armed with this information, I went to the Family History Center to see what I could discover. I was able to find my grandfather in the 1920 census in Boulder, Colorado, and the record of my father's death in the Social Security Death Index (SSDI), but that was it. Over the next two years, I found much of my mother's family history but nothing on my father's ancestors.

Then I decided to use the Internet to look for references to my father's family, since both he and his father had an



unusual name. To my surprise, I found a Web site that had my paternal grandmother's lineage traced back to Connecticut in the 1680s. I was thrilled, but I still had nothing on my paternal grandfather's line.

Then one evening, one of my searches turned up a reference to a cousin whom I hadn't heard from in 30 years. I e-mailed him. In his response, he mentioned that someone was looking for me and included the link to that Web site. When I went to it, I discovered a message that said, in part: "In search of Joyce Loutzenheiser, married Wharton Kinsey Gray. . . . In search of her daughter, Katherine Kinsey Gray." I immediately sent an e-mail to the woman who had made the posting—Ruth. The next day she replied. She turned out to be my father's first cousin. I telephoned her that afternoon and, for the first time in my life, actually spoke to someone in my father's family.

Ruth began by telling me that she and her sister had been looking for me for 10 years. They had cleared out my grandmother's home when she died 12 years earlier and had photographs, letters, documents, and other items that had belonged to my father and my grandmother. While Ruth had never met my father, she had known my grandmother quite

well and had met my grandfather. She put me in touch with the widow of my father's brother, who also provided information about the family.

There is no question in my mind that this happened on the Lord's timetable. Now after my first tentative steps into the realm of family history, I have photographs of my father and his parents and grandparents. I know that my son bears a striking resemblance to his grandfather. I have learned that my father was a gifted artist, and I even have slides of his paintings. I will soon have letters that he sent to his mother and the one remaining oil painting that he did. I feel as if half of myself has been restored to me. Best of all, however, I am making a connection with family members I never knew I had.

I know that I have been given an incredible gift and that, as in the parable of the talents, it is up to me to take this gift and make it grow (see Matthew 25:14–30). There is no doubt in my mind that my father, grandparents, and many others are waiting for me to do their temple ordinance work for them. Although I never knew my father, I have been blessed to give him a priceless gift. These experiences have increased my testimony of the importance of family history and temple work and have demonstrated how great God's love is for each of us. ■

Kathy Crawford is a member of the Mountain Park Ward, Tempe Arizona West Stake.

Above left: Kathy Crawford (far left) with cousins.

Top left: Her father, Wharton Kinsey Gray Jr., during

World War II and as a toddler. Far left: One of his paintings.

Other photographs are of ancestors the author discovered as a result of her Internet contacts.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

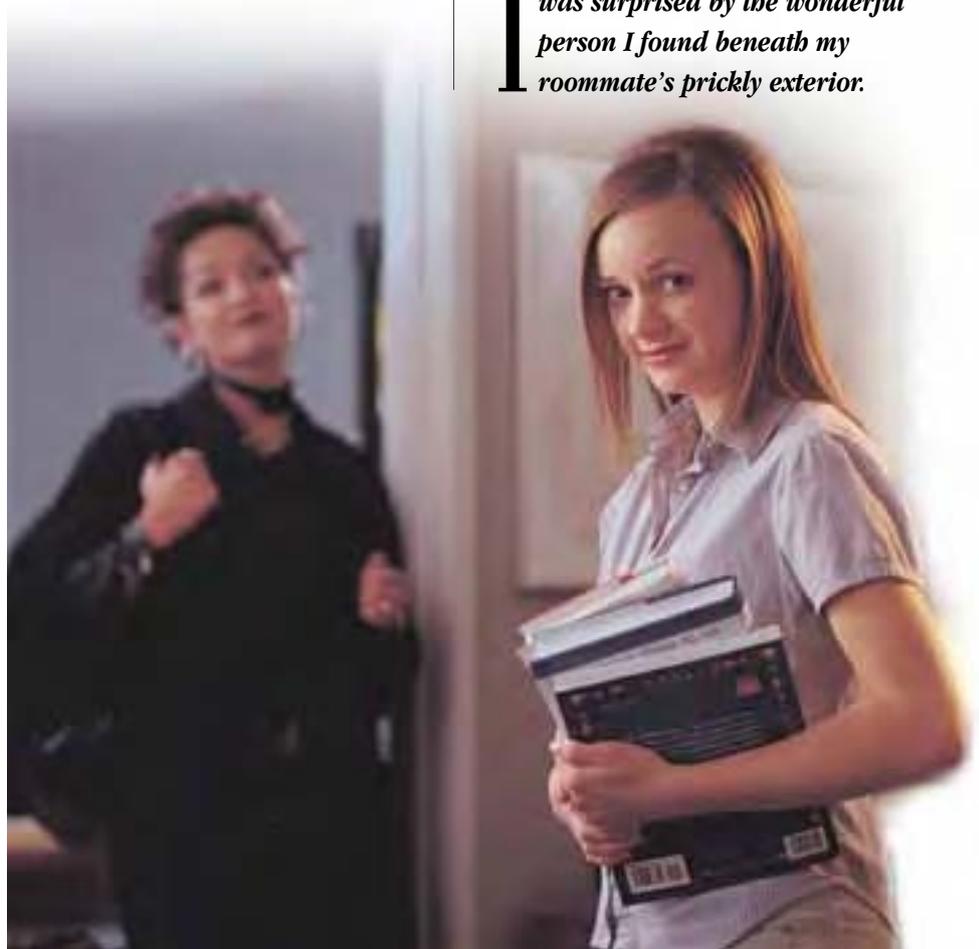
Question

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

My heart sank when I saw my new roommate for the first time. It was obvious that our lifestyles were different, and I worried that our little dorm room would get unbearable in a hurry. However, I knew I had to try to make it work, so I welcomed her and helped her get settled. She warmed up to me as I asked her questions about her life and shared experiences from my own.

I was soon surprised by the wonderful person I found beneath her prickly Gothic exterior. Here was a woman who was reading the New Testament in ancient Greek! I shared my standards with her, and she respected me for them. Although I knew she dabbled in tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, she respected me enough to keep them out of our room. She saved me from my

I was surprised by the wonderful person I found beneath my roommate's prickly exterior.



My roommates and I had event nights, similar to family home evenings. We would go on bike rides or hikes, participate in service projects, and do other enjoyable activities.

naiveté by steering me clear of places and activities that would have been dangerous for me.

I gained a good friend that year because I focused on her good qualities and never condemned her for her lifestyle. Her efforts to respect my beliefs and find activities that were comfortable for both of us strengthened our friendship. The Spirit was able to abide in our room, and we both enjoyed the haven we had worked hard to create.

Meaghan James, Parkland Ward, Lakewood Washington Stake

I had more than 30 roommates during my college years. Because I attended Brigham Young University, most of my roommates were Latter-day Saints, and I didn't have the problems others might have. But there were plenty of times when the Spirit was not dwelling in our apartment. I found that the greatest thing I could do to maintain a positive atmosphere was to work on my own habits and attitudes rather than trying to change my roommates' behavior.

One thing that helped was to rise early in the morning. By setting my alarm clock a half hour earlier, I was guaranteed some quiet time to myself. This was a wonderful time to pray and study the scriptures without interruption. The day was always much better when I had this time.



I also tried to maintain a broad perspective. Life with roommates is just temporary, and I had to remind myself of that. The key is to like people for who they are and to look for the good in them while setting the best example you can. If you're doing all you can to progress spiritually and be happy, the Lord will bless you in your efforts.

Dan Baker, Bremerton First Ward, Bremerton Washington Stake

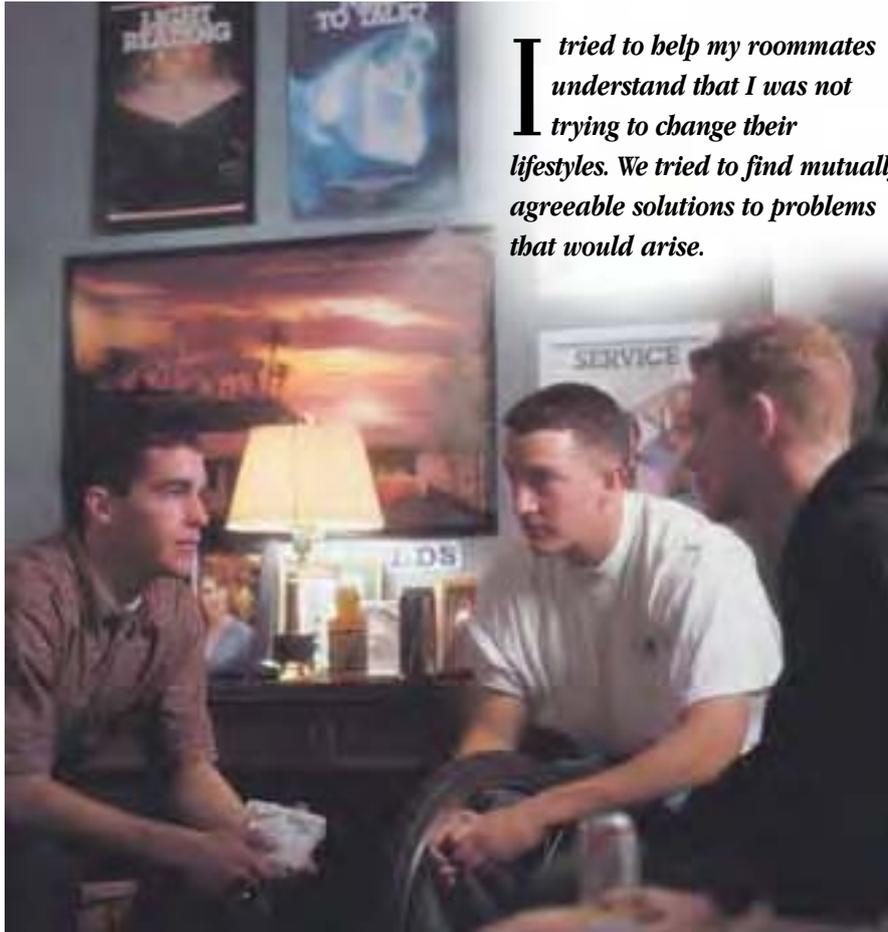
Is it hard to live with roommates who do not lead the same kind of life as you? Yes! But it is also a wonderful opportunity to teach and to learn.

I attended a Catholic university for four years and was the only Latter-day Saint at the school. I remember one Friday night near the beginning of my

freshman year. I sat in my room in tears, frustrated and lonely. My friends had all just left for a night out at the movies. I had found out the movie they planned to see was not up to my standards, so I had told them to go ahead without me.

This type of situation was starting to become a regular occurrence, but it was getting old. Finally I vowed to plan some wholesome, fun activities we could all enjoy together. As we took part in these activities, things began to change. I also found some true friends along the way who likewise wanted to lead clean lives and choose the right.

My roommates and I began to have dinner together regularly. We would cook together, eat together,



I tried to help my roommates understand that I was not trying to change their lifestyles. We tried to find mutually agreeable solutions to problems that would arise.

clean together, and discuss the day's events. We came to know each other's needs through these nightly discussions, and we were able to serve each other better.

We also had event nights, similar to family home evenings. On these nights my roommates and I would make crafts, write letters, participate in service projects, go on bike rides or hikes, and do other activities. We had so much fun during these nights that our friendship flourished.

College is a time of exploration for many. I found that I could help others find the strength and courage to make good choices and head down the right path. I received strength through prayer, scripture study, church attendance, and the love Heavenly Father has for me. We all

lived our lives in a more righteous way.

Jenna Johnson Smith, Eugene Ninth (Spanish) Branch, Eugene Oregon Stake

Waking up to the smell of coffee in the morning and opening the refrigerator to find a six-pack of beer can be quite unsettling. Even more unsettling is coming out in pajamas to find your roommate's significant other eating breakfast or getting out of the shower. I also experienced coming home to find roommates smoking, watching offensive movies or TV shows, or having parties where most of the guests were intoxicated.

Despite our different standards and lifestyles, I was able to develop positive relationships with my roommates. Here are several ideas that might also help you:

1. *Pray.* I petitioned Heavenly Father to give me patience and love and to soften my roommates' hearts. I also asked Him to help bring the Spirit into our home and to help us all become better friends.

2. *Discuss and negotiate solutions.* I tried to help my roommates understand that I was not trying to change their lifestyles. No one has the right to take away another's agency, so we must try to find mutually agreeable solutions to problems that might arise. I asked that everyone in the common area be fully clothed, that I be given advance notice about parties and movies I might find offensive, and that smoking occur only outside. In turn, I agreed to leave the house when there were going to be parties or activities I did not want to participate in. I also ignored the coffee in the morning and the alcohol in the fridge.

3. *Fortify yourself.* No matter how your roommates respond, it is important to continue to nurture and strengthen yourself spiritually. I found a place of personal retreat where I could meditate and build my testimony when my home was too full of distractions. For you this may be your room, a quiet place outside, or another location. In addition, I leaned upon Latter-day Saint friends and family to help reinforce my righteous decisions.

Kara Kelley, Arrowhead Ranch Ward, Glendale Arizona North Stake

When I was attending a polytechnic school, there were few Latter-day

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Saints on campus. I was the only Church member out of the approximately 150 male students in my dormitory. I worried because our backgrounds and lifestyles were so different, so I prayed to Heavenly Father to know what I could do.

I felt inspired to do several things. I never forgot my daily prayers and scripture study, especially of the Book of Mormon. In addition to that, my room was always full of gospel-oriented pictures. These pictures invited questions that opened an avenue for sharing the gospel. I invited my friends to attend sacrament meetings and institute classes with me, which helped them better understand my beliefs. Eventually I noticed that many of my friends were adopting standards similar to mine.

I came to better understand the importance of maintaining our standards at all times and in all things and in all places (see Mosiah 18:9). When we do so, we can make a difference.

Isaac Kofi Morrison, Mpintsin Ward, Takoradi Ghana Stake

As a recently baptized member of the Church, I lived with three girls who did not share my new beliefs. Over the year we lived together, I discovered that in order to maintain a positive atmosphere in our apartment, I needed to do the following:

1. *Have an optimistic attitude.*

Seeing roommates every day can get exhausting sometimes. We may start to notice negative things about them because we are around them so

much. We need to remain optimistic about our situations and seek out our roommates' virtues. No matter if it is taking the time to write a note thanking them for their friendship, stopping what we are doing to listen when they've had a hard day, or rearranging our schedule to fit in a quick trip for some ice cream and a talk, the little things we do can reinforce an optimistic attitude among roommates.

2. *Set a good example.* Roommates see us at our best and at our worst. Living the standards of the Church every day, not just when it suits us, makes a strong statement to others. When we continually do the things we are asked to do, we are blessed, and the people around us often live through the experience with us. For example, my roommates saw me pay my tithing even when I was struggling financially. They later saw many of the blessings that came to me when I did this.

Angela Rowley, Thousand Oaks Second Ward, Thousand Oaks California Stake

During the second semester that I attended BYU—Hawaii, I decided to move off campus to a house in a nearby town. All eight of us in the house were students at BYU—Hawaii, but not all had the same standards.

While I never became close with some of my roommates, I was able to maintain positive relationships with all of them and to work out problems as they arose. This I attribute to some gospel-related habits I developed throughout that year. Prayer and scripture study were two of my staples. I found that if I would pray about how to resolve conflicts peacefully, the answers would come either to my mind or through the words of the scriptures. Another staple was attending church every week and encouraging my roommates to do the same.

While this wasn't the easiest semester of my college life, I am grateful for the opportunity it gave me to stand firm in my testimony of the gospel even when others around me did not.

Kim Flewallen, Timpanogos Sixth Ward, Pleasant Grove Utah Timpanogos Stake

TIPS FOR GETTING ALONG WITH ROOMMATES

- Do not condemn your roommates for their choices. Respect their agency, knowing that you can only control your own behavior.
- Know that this will be a time to prove yourself. Will you follow the crowd, or will you be strong enough to stand up for what you believe in?
 - If your roommate situation is unbearable or unsafe, find a new place to live. But if your situation is not extreme, at least have a refuge so you can get away if you need to.
 - Suggest activities that all of you can enjoy together.
 - Look for your roommates' positive qualities.
 - Try to maintain a clean, uplifting environment.
 - Be open to answering questions and sharing what you believe. Also be willing to learn from your roommates' beliefs.
 - Seek inspiration regarding how to get along with your roommates. Stay close to the Lord through prayer and scripture study.

5 SMALL EXPERIENCES

Blessings come to those who give without remembering and receive without forgetting.

BY ELDER STEPHEN A. WEST

Of the Seventy



Each of the experiences I have related is about someone who received without forgetting.

I want to tell you about five small experiences and then tie them together at the end.

In 1999 my wife and I toured the Arkansas Little Rock Mission. After a zone conference, President Don Lee Christensen, the mission president, turned on his answering machine at the mission home. This is what we heard:

“I’d just like to pass something along to the two gentlemen or ladies of your faith who were out the day before Thanksgiving in Russellville. That was the day of my wife’s funeral. I didn’t see it,

but my sister said she saw two people on bikes who were well dressed. When the funeral procession went by, they stopped their bikes and took off their helmets and placed them over their hearts. I’d just like to relate to all of your people, and especially to those two, if you happen to know who they are, how special that is to me and how much I appreciate it. It was very touching, and I will always remember and appreciate it. Thank you very much.”

A second small but profound experience took place when my wife and I visited the Alaska Anchorage Mission in 2002. After a day of zone conferences, President KearLee

Wright, the president of the Soldotna Alaska Stake, shared with me the following letter:

“Over 15 years ago, two young men came to my door and wanted to discuss the gospel of Jesus Christ with me. Unfortunately, I was extremely rude to them, rejected their offer out of hand, and closed the door in their face. I have no way of contacting those specific two young men, but if I could, I would apologize and thank them. I thought about their visit long after I so rudely dismissed them from my doorstep. Their visit triggered a series of events in my life that have brought me much closer to God and my family.

“They have no way of knowing what an impact they had on me. I certainly gave them no indication that I was at all receptive to God at that time; I wasn’t. Perhaps they prayed for me as they left my driveway. If they did, their prayers were answered. That night, I prayed for the first time in years. Shortly after that, I quit drinking. I had battled alcohol for many years previous. I have not had a drink for 14 years now. I entered church for the first time in many years, and after a great deal of searching, my family and I have found a place to worship in an Episcopal church.

“The point of my letter is that one never knows what the ultimate impact of his or her efforts may be. The two young men who contacted me never got any indication that they had made any impact on me, but their impact was profound, and they played a critical role in my journey back to God. Perhaps sharing this story with some of the young men and women who are about to go out into



As the funeral procession went by, the missionaries stopped their bikes and took off their helmets and placed them over their hearts. "It was very touching," the man said, "and I will always remember and appreciate it."

missionary work may help them deal with some of the inevitable rejection they are bound to encounter. Even cases of apparent rejection may actually be victories.

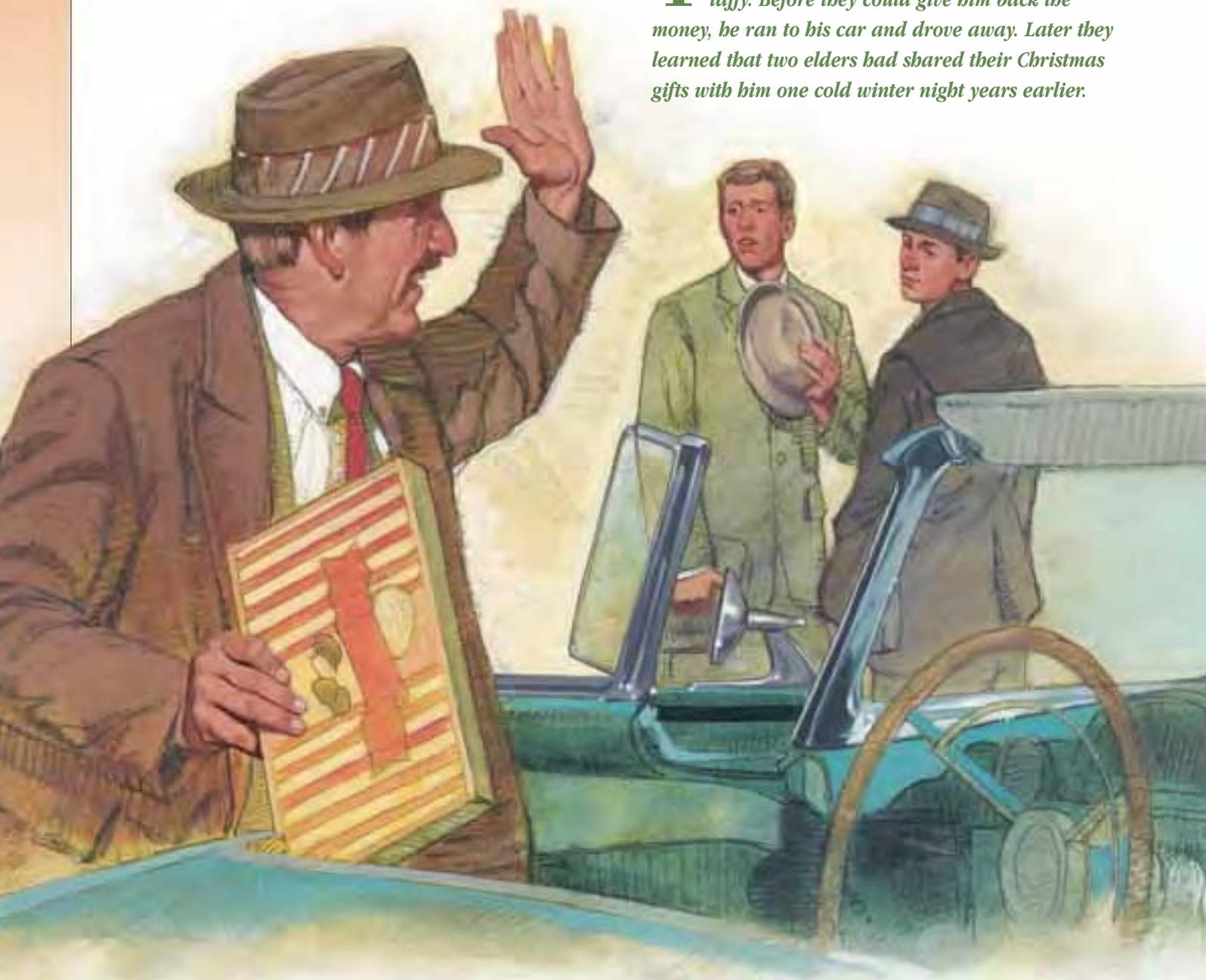
“Thank you for . . . the work you and your ministers do in spreading the word of God.”

A third experience occurred while we were touring the Jamaica Kingston Mission in 2000. As we drove through a slum in Kingston, I saw graffiti written in large white brush strokes on a brick wall of a decrepit building. The message

read, “Blessed are those who can give without remembering and those who can receive without forgetting.”

A fourth experience happened in 1957 in Portland, Oregon, where I served as a young missionary in the Northwestern States Mission. Several of us were walking from the mission home to the mission office a few blocks away. As we walked, a car stopped abruptly, and a man jumped out

T*he man got out of his car and handed the missionaries \$9.00 and a box of saltwater taffy. Before they could give him back the money, he ran to his car and drove away. Later they learned that two elders had shared their Christmas gifts with him one cold winter night years earlier.*



and ran toward us asking, "Are you preaching the gospel of Brigham?" We started to reply, "We are missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," when he handed us \$9.00 and a box of saltwater taffy. Before we could give him back the money, he ran back to his car and drove away. We thought the experience was very unusual.

Some months later in a multizone conference, a missionary told about an experience he and his companion had while waiting at a bus stop. A man stopped his car, jumped out, and gave them \$7.00 and a box of peanut brittle, then drove off. Another missionary related a similar experience while tracting in a suburb of Portland, this time with \$14.00 and a box of chocolate mints. The pattern continued as one missionary after another told similar stories, each involving various amounts of money and different types of candy; in all instances, the man left before much discussion could ensue.

Finally, a missionary stood and told how he and his companion happened to know this man. As the elders were preparing to enter a bus station, a man, seeing they were missionaries for the Church, asked where they were going and if they needed a ride. Those being simpler and safer days, the missionaries accepted the offer and rode with him south through Oregon. During the course of that ride, their newfound friend gave them some money and candy, then told them this story:

In 1932 he had been young and unemployed because of the Depression. While crossing the United States as a vagrant looking for work, he ventured to a town in the northern part of the Great Plains. Since it was Christmas Eve and he had no place to stay, he decided to crawl under a bridge to spend the night out of the snow. He found there were two people already there—two young men in coats and ties and white shirts with some packages on their laps. They were LDS missionaries who had just been to the post office to pick up Christmas packages sent to them by their families. Being too excited to wait until they arrived home, they had decided to get out of the snow and see what their families had sent.

The missionaries invited the vagrant to join them under the bridge as they opened their packages. One of the

missionaries received cookies and hand-knit gloves. The other received brownies, homemade candy, and a hand-knit scarf. As they sat under the bridge, they shared their treats with this man and then sang Christmas carols together. When the elders were ready to leave, they asked the man if he had a place to sleep. He told them he was used to staying outdoors and would be all right. They then said, "If you are going to stay here, you should take our cookies and brownies to eat as well as the scarf and gloves to keep you warm." He protested, but they persisted, so he happily accepted the cookies, brownies, scarf, and gloves. The missionaries then left to go to their lodgings.

The man told the two missionaries he was giving a ride to in 1957 that he had never forgotten that experience and had resolved to never pass LDS missionaries without giving them whatever cash he had in his pocket. And inasmuch as he was at that time a wholesale candy salesman, he could also share samples of his wares. He told the missionaries he had been doing this for years and years. When they asked if he was a member of the Church, he said he was not because his wife objected to it. But he added that if she ever consented, he would be most interested in joining. For 25 years, he had been sharing with our missionaries. Who knows how long thereafter he continued to do the same.

A fifth and final experience is one that took place in Salt Lake City in the winter of 2000. One evening at dusk as I left the Church Administration Building, a man approached me and, with alcohol on his breath, asked if I was a General Authority. When I said yes, he immediately fell to his knees and requested a blessing.

I hesitated as several thoughts went through my mind. First, I thought of the words in Matthew 6:5, which says, "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray . . . in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men."

I also thought of how I could avoid the situation, and Luke 10:31–32 came to mind: "And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite,



when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.”

I thought, “Should I pass by ‘on the other side’? It wouldn’t be appropriate to give him a blessing on the street with all these people nearby. Also, as soon as I give him the blessing, he will probably ask for a contribution.” At that moment, I remembered the words of Mosiah

4:16–19:

“Ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; and ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish.

“Perhaps thou shalt say: The man has brought upon himself his misery; therefore I will stay my hand, and will not give unto him . . . of my substance that he may not suffer, for his punishments are just—

“But I say unto you, O man, whosoever doeth this the same hath great cause to repent.”

Then I gave him a blessing. When I finished, he stood up, hugged me, pushed himself away leaving his hands on both my shoulders, and looking me in the eye said, “Thank you, brother. I really needed that.” Then he turned and walked away.

Those seven words summarize the significance of the five experiences I have related: “Thank you, brother. I really needed that.” I think that is what the widower in Arkansas was trying to convey to the missionaries. That is what the man in Anchorage was trying to express to the two missionaries he rejected on his doorstep but whose spirit and demeanor changed his life. That is what the man, once a vagrant and then a candy salesman, was saying to the missionaries who helped him on Christmas Eve and to all the missionaries he encountered thereafter.

The man’s genuine expression of gratitude in his simple words, “Thank you, brother. I really needed that,” touched me in ways that brought about needed changes in my behavior.

You may now think that I am going to say this is also what the man requesting the blessing was saying to me. Not so! The point I really want to make concerns what I wish I could now say to the man I met on the streets of Salt Lake. At the time, I had doubted his sincerity. I had worried about appearances. I had thought about walking on the other side. I assumed he would ask for a hand-out. But his faith in asking for a blessing and his expression of gratitude when he said, “Thank you, brother. I really needed that,” touched me in ways that have

brought about needed changes in my thinking and behavior.

Let us remember the phrase from the wall in Kingston, Jamaica: “Blessed are those who can give without remembering and those who can receive without forgetting.” Each of the experiences I have related is about someone who received without forgetting. I pray that in my own case that may also be the result, that I received a man’s thanks without forgetting the lesson he taught me. ■

From a devotional address given to the Church Curriculum Department on 3 May 2002.

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Invite family members to look for what Elder West’s five experiences have in common as they take turns reading them. Discuss ways family members can show sincere gratitude.
2. Choose together a favorite sentence from this article and make it into a poster. Put it someplace where everyone in the family can see it often.
3. In Elder West’s experiences, who was thankful and why, and who gave service and why? Invite family members to share experiences when they have received service from or offered service to others. Bear testimony of the value of selfless love and service.

Feeling the Love of the Lord through Exercising Faith

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

How Can We Access the Power of Faith?

Alma 32:28: “If ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, . . . ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed . . . for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me.”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Faith exists when absolute confidence in that which we cannot see combines with action that is in absolute conformity to the will of our Heavenly Father. . . . Only when our faith is aligned with the will of our Heavenly Father will we be empowered to receive the blessings we seek” (“Shall He Find Faith on the Earth?” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 83–84).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “The exercise of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is always subject to the order of heaven, to the goodness and will and wisdom and timing of the Lord. That is why we

cannot have true faith in the Lord without also having complete trust in the Lord’s will and in the Lord’s timing” (“Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 100).

Eliza R. Snow (1804–87), former Relief Society general president: “Faith [is] energy. . . . We must be energetic” (as reported in Morgan Utah Stake Relief Society Minutes and Record, 29 July 1882).

In What Ways Can We Experience the Lord’s Love through Faith?

Helaman 5:47: “Peace, peace be unto you, because of your faith.”

Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society general president: “As we exercise faith in the Lord, we learn to trust that His promises to us will be fulfilled. We have confidence that we will not be left alone, for the Lord will be our source of strength. His peace that passeth understanding will fill our souls. Sisters, seek faith in the Savior first.”

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Don’t look for a life virtually free from discomfort, pain, pressure, challenge, or grief, for those are the tools a loving Father uses to stimulate our personal



growth and understanding. As the scriptures repeatedly

affirm, you will be helped as you exercise *faith in Jesus Christ*. . . . Faith in Christ means we trust Him; we trust His teachings. That leads to hope, and hope brings charity, the pure love of Christ—that peaceful feeling that comes when we sense His concern, His love, and His capacity to cure us or to ease our burdens with His healing power” (“To Be Healed,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 8).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “We can say: ‘I know that [God] loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things’ (1 Nephi 11:17). There have been and will be times in each of our lives when such faith must be the bottom line: We don’t know what is happening to us or around us, but we know that God loves us, and knowing that, for the moment, is enough” (“*Not My Will, But Thine*” [1988], 119). ■

On Alert

By Joel Fairfield

While sitting in my police car watching for speeders one afternoon in June 1996, I heard on my radio a report of an argument between a convenience store clerk and some customers. Two junior officers were being sent to the store. I wasn't seeing many speeders,

so I decided to drive to the store to offer help. I felt impressed to drive along a seldom-used road.

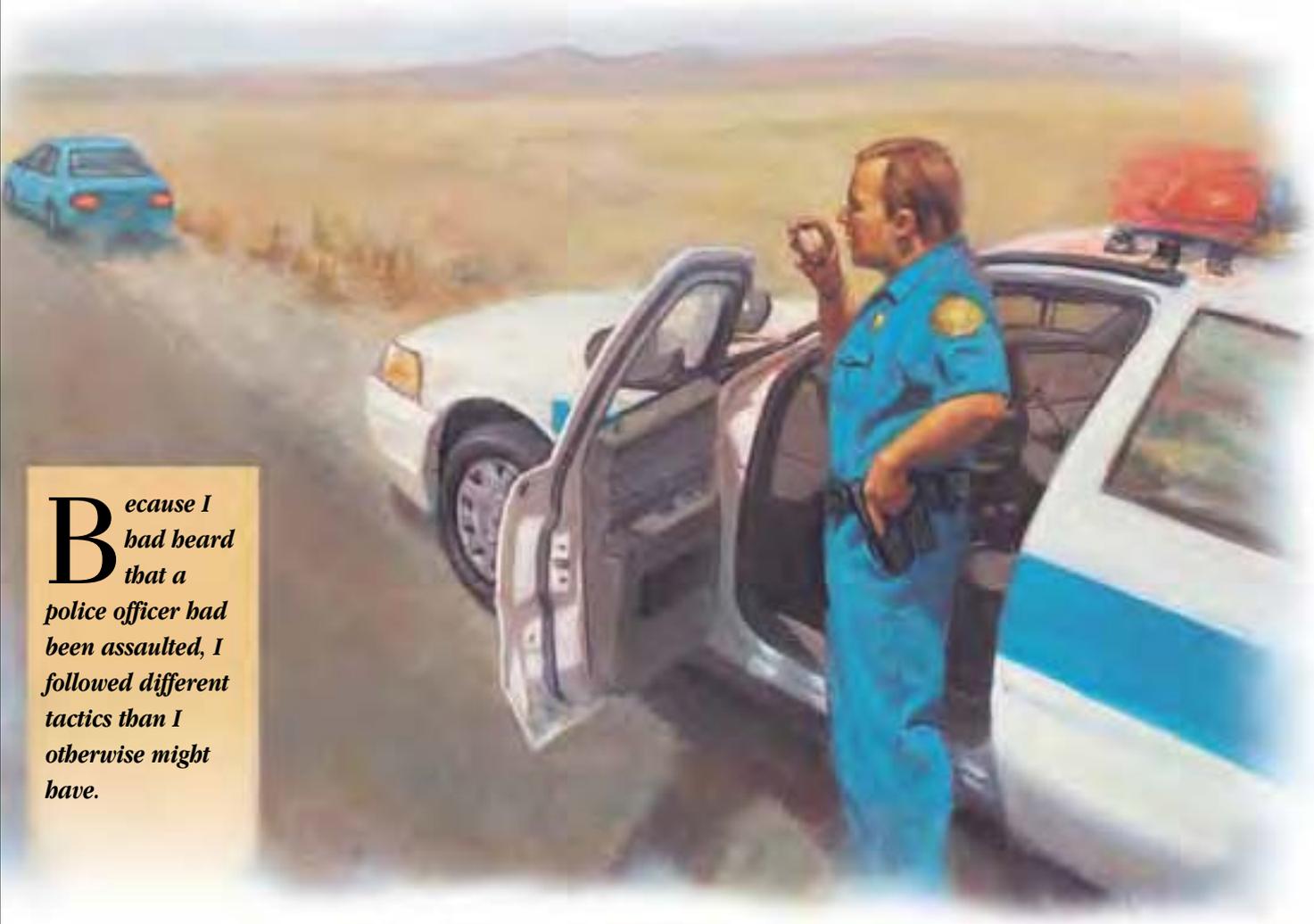
Before long I heard on the radio that the first officer to arrive on the scene was Ben. I was concerned because he was a newly hired officer with little experience.

As I continued on the back road, I heard the dispatcher report that the customers at the store were drunk and becoming combative. I was somewhat relieved when I heard

that the second officer, Rocky, who was a little more experienced, had arrived at the scene.

Then came a report that the customers, four of them, had just left in a blue compact car. Still driving toward the scene, I heard another police jurisdiction broadcast a description of the car and its occupants and request officers to look for it. Rocky's voice came on the radio, giving the direction the car was last seen traveling.

Because I had heard that a police officer had been assaulted, I followed different tactics than I otherwise might have.



Moments later, I saw the car speeding toward me. My heart sank when I heard someone advise that an officer had been assaulted. I guessed that Ben, the rookie officer who was first on the scene, had been attacked.

I quickly turned around and began to follow the car, which then pulled over and stopped as if waiting for me to pass. Believing that the people in the car had just assaulted a police officer, I followed different tactics than I might have otherwise, and all my senses were on alert. I turned on my emergency lights and stopped my car some distance behind the vehicle. After informing the dispatcher that I had the car stopped, I drew my gun and waited for backup. About a minute later Rocky arrived to assist me.

We began to call each person out of the car at gunpoint, one at a time. Rocky interviewed each person. In the meantime our sergeant arrived with an off-duty officer who, it turned out, had been assaulted only verbally by two of the men in the blue car. Ben was uninjured and was still at the store interviewing witnesses.

The four men were arrested. Inside their car was a semiautomatic assault rifle and several boxes of ammunition. Later we discovered that the rifle had been modified to function like a machine gun. We also learned that one of the men arrested was a gang member with a long history of violence, especially against the police.

After our police reports were finished, we conducted a debriefing,

during which I recounted the events as I remembered them. I told the others I had heard that the people in the blue car had assaulted a police officer. The room grew quiet for a moment, and then the sergeant said that no one on any of the radio frequencies had said anything about a police officer being assaulted. I looked around the room, and all agreed that no one had said anything about an officer being assaulted. I told them I had definitely heard someone report it.

Ultimately I concluded that the Holy Ghost had spoken to me in such a way that I would listen at a critical time. Had I not heard that an officer had been assaulted, I might have been less cautious—and I might even have lost my life.

I am deeply grateful for the voice of inspiration that put me on alert that day. ■

Joel Fairfield is a member of the Stevensville First Ward, Stevensville Montana Stake.

The Lord's Mathematics

By Richard J. Anderson

My wife and I tearfully opened the letter containing our mission call. We had been planning for many years to serve a mission together. Now we were delighted to find we were called to the New Zealand Auckland Mission, where I had served 45 years earlier as a young

missionary. Memories of those wonderful years flooded my mind.

One day during my first mission, my companion, Elder Gordon Gallup, and I walked along a rural road late in the day when there was little traffic. It seemed no one wanted to give a ride to two tired elders. We knelt and asked the Lord to help us get a ride.

Almost immediately a pickup truck stopped. The driver, Sam Potaka, lived close to Taihape, our destination. When we reached his village, Utiku, he invited us to stay for dinner at his house. We held a wonderful missionary discussion with his family, and in due time Sam's wife, mother-in-law, two married daughters, one married son, and their families gained testimonies and joined the Church. Later two other sons were also converted. The conversion of this wonderful family was a highlight of my mission.

Forty-five years later, my wife and I wondered if any of those I had taught would still be alive. Would we be able to find them? Would they be active in the Church?

Soon after we arrived in New Zealand, we found more than 100 descendants of Sam Potaka, including children, grandchildren, and their families. Most had remained active in the Church. Many had become leaders in their stakes and wards and had sent their children and grandchildren on missions.

One of Sam Potaka's daughters, Una Tsaclis, had become a family

history expert. She had researched hundreds of ancestors, including her husband's Greek progenitors. Because there are few members of the Church in Greece, her family history work was unique.

My wife and I were invited to go to the New Zealand temple with Una and other family members to perform sealings for their ancestors. It was an unforgettable temple experience. We realized that not only had many family

members joined the Church because a good man listened to the Spirit and gave a ride to two missionaries, but now those family members and their children were performing temple ordinances for hundreds of Greek and Maori ancestors who had passed away without the opportunity of hearing the gospel. The Lord's mathematics multiplies the opportunities to share and accept the gospel both in this life and after death.

Never before had Doctrine and Covenants 64:33 meant so much: "Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great." ■

Richard J. Anderson is a member of the Florence Ward, Coos Bay Oregon Stake.

Help from Heaven

By Ceferina Dora Flores

The patient was tall, good-looking, and dressed in white, and he looked into my eyes without uttering a word. I had come to pick up his prescription so I could go buy his medication.

Just then a nurse, also dressed in white, appeared and held out a piece of paper to me. It seemed to be a medical history.

"Is this his file number?" I asked.

She did not reply but merely

A nurse appeared and held out a paper to me. She turned the sheet over, and there on the back was a number.

turned the sheet over. There on the back was a number: 12.830.

This incident would not be remarkable in any way if it were not for the fact that this particular patient had died more than a year before, on 7 April 1990. He was my younger brother, Carlos Hugo, and I was only dreaming.

I awoke at 4:00 A.M. and immediately wrote down the number. That same day I got up early and told my daughter Ana about the dream. I showed her the number, and she said it looked like a date, not a number on a medical file. A light went on in my mind. This dream had to have something to do with the family history information I was looking for on my paternal grandmother. For 10 years I had tried to find my father's birth certificate. With no success, I had turned my efforts toward locating information on his mother.

When I had the dream, I had intended to return to the historical archives in the province of Mendoza, Argentina, to see if researchers had found any information that might be useful to me. I had asked them to search the years between 1925 and 1932. But before going to the archives, I felt a strong prompting to visit the Godoy Cruz cemetery.

By 8:00 A.M. that same morning, I was asking Mr. Paz, an employee at the cemetery, if he would do me the favor of using that date to look through his records for any information on the death of my grandmother,

Margarita Flores. As he leafed through the old worn books, I prayed silently and fervently.

Suddenly I heard him say, "Well, are you ever lucky! This is where your grandmother is buried." He wrote out a document so stating, signed it, affixed a seal to it, and then kindly went with me to sector H, where I saw a small brass plate that read, "Margarita Flores. Died 12/8/1930"—the same date I had seen in my dream.

I was not yet born when my grandmother died. But more than 60 years after her death, I was able to find the place where she was buried.

I next went to the archives to see if they had found anything relating to my grandmother. "Negative," said the man who waited on me. I handed him the certificate Mr. Paz had given me at the cemetery, and five minutes later I was holding a photocopy of my grandmother's death certificate in my hands. Using this information, I was eventually able to locate my father's birth certificate and the names of my great-grandparents.

In His infinite mercy, our loving Heavenly Father had made it possible for necessary information to be communicated to me. I immediately sent all the data I had obtained to the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple so that vicarious ordinances could be performed.

I know I have much more to do. But I also know that when our minds and hearts are willing and when we

make the effort, we receive help from heaven. One day there will be a glorious resurrection, and with all my being I desire to find myself united with my loved ones. ■

Ceferina Dora Flores is a member of the Godoy Cruz Centro Ward, Godoy Cruz Argentina Stake.

No Trespassing

By Linda Marx Terry

It was almost the end of the month, and I had visited every sister on my new visiting teaching list except one. I'd never met Joan (name has been changed). She did not attend church, and in the recent past, she had not wanted to have contact with the Church.

I had made many phone calls to her home throughout the month, but they were always greeted by her answering machine, no matter what time I called. I left several voice messages, introducing myself as her new visiting teacher, telling her I was looking forward to meeting her, and asking her to return my call. But Joan never called back.

With only a few days left in the month, I decided to drop by Joan's home unannounced with a plate of muffins. But as I drove up and down the busy highway near her street, I realized that none of the numbers on the houses matched the address I had been given for her. I became increasingly frustrated, thinking,

A *Armed with my muffins, I hesitated when I saw a big No Trespassing sign but cautiously continued toward Joan's porch.*



“Why am I doing this? She probably won’t even be home, and if I leave the muffins on her porch, some dog will most likely eat them.” Finally I checked my ward directory and discovered that Joan’s address on my visiting teaching list was incorrect. With the correct address, I found the home within minutes.

Armed with my muffins, I walked toward Joan’s house. I hesitated when I saw a big No Trespassing sign but cautiously continued toward her porch. I rang the doorbell two times. No answer. Thinking, “Well, at least I tried,” I left the muffins and my note near Joan’s front door.

That evening at dinner, I mentioned to my family my apparently

wasted hour attempting to reach this faceless, voiceless, impossible-to-contact sister. During the meal the phone rang. Contrary to our mealtime practice, I answered it. The woman on the phone identified herself as Joan. Suddenly feeling as though I had been reunited with a friend, rather than the stranger she was, I whooped, “Joan! I’ve wanted to hear your voice for so long! I’m so excited you’ve called!”

Joan explained that she hadn’t returned my calls because of recent turmoil in her life. She continued, “Today I was at the courthouse, feeling defeated and humiliated as I stood in front of the judge and my estranged husband. When I drove home, I prayed, ‘God, I feel so worthless and

unloved.’ Sobbing, I asked, ‘If You love me, please show me.’

“When I reached home, there before my eyes, as though a miracle from God, was a plate of muffins and a note saying, ‘I’m thinking of you. Love, your visiting teacher.’ It was as if God were saying to me that He loved me. I just wanted you to know that I know God used you to answer my prayer today.”

Since that day Joan has become my friend. We have read the scriptures and prayed together, and she has joined me at church. She has been a gift to me, teaching me never to give up when serving the Lord. ■

Linda Marx Terry is a member of the Sinclair View Ward, Bremerton Washington Stake.

Scripture Study with Children

I remember how much my interest in studying the scriptures grew when I began marking them as a teenager. Wanting my elementary-age children to experience this excitement, I introduced a marking system that is simple enough for children yet meaningful for adults.

Red: Like a stop sign, this color reminds us what we *should not* do.

Green: A signal to “go,” green indicates what we *should* do.

Blue: We use blue to highlight the *blessings* we are promised if we obey.

Now when we read the scriptures together, the children, each with his or her own book, pay a little more attention when I remind them to get their pencils ready. They

enjoy looking for scriptures they can color,

and all of us are turning our scriptures into personal guidebooks.

Marianne Olson, Garden Grove Sixth Ward, Garden Grove California Stake

Activation through Visiting Teaching

I enjoy reaching out to sisters in my ward through the visiting teaching program. I have a testimony of the importance of these personal visits and make them a priority. Throughout the years, some of the sisters I have visited have been less active. As I have befriended them and helped them grow in the gospel, I have learned several ways to help activate and retain those I visit:

Fast and pray. To determine a sister’s needs, consider fasting and praying for her. Before each visit, pray with your companion to invite the Spirit and to seek guidance.

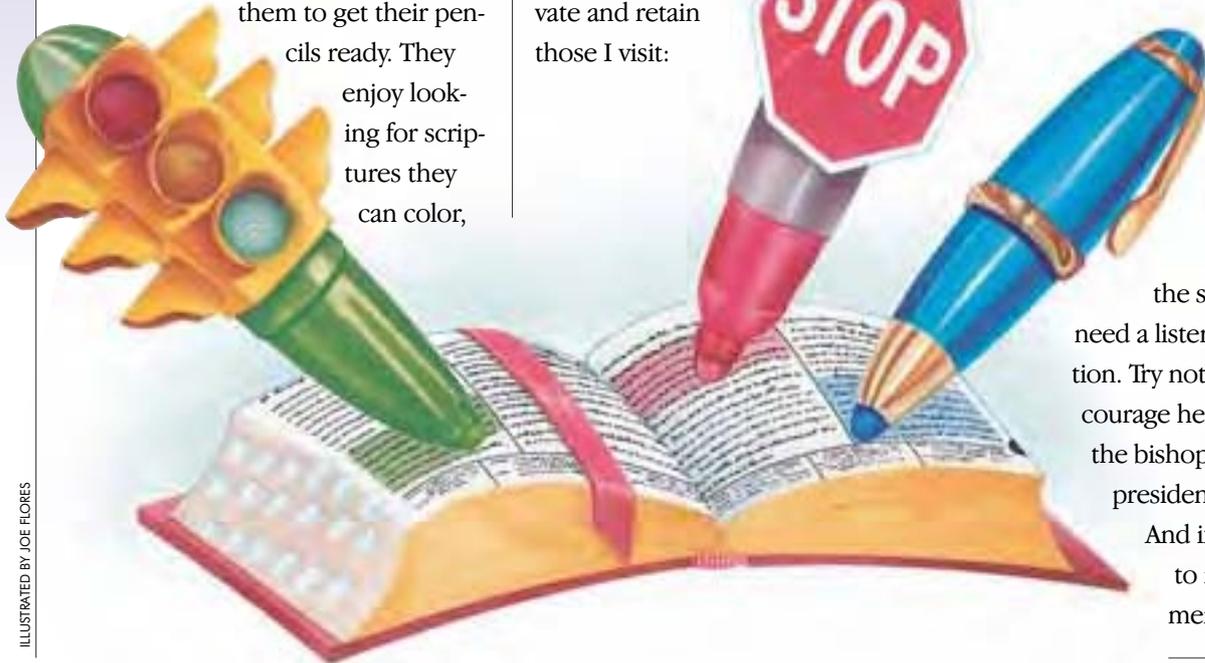
Befriend. Get to know her personally. Ask about her interests, her background, and her family. If you know how to do family history research, offer to help her start. Another way to build your friendship is to remember her birthday, anniversary, or children’s birthdays—information you may be able to obtain in a get-to-know-you visit. Celebrating the birthdays does not have to be expensive. The fact that you remember them is more important.

Inform and invite. Provide information about your ward and stake. Notifying your sister of leaders’ phone numbers, meeting schedules, and plans for upcoming activities is especially helpful. Invite her to

Sunday Church meetings, as well as home, family, and personal enrichment meetings.

Listen. Sometimes the sister you visit will need a listening ear, not a solution. Try not to judge, and encourage her to seek help from the bishop or Relief Society president when needed.

And if your sister wants to recount favorite memories from her



FAMILY HOME EVENING HELPS



Five Family History Activities

What better month than February to help your family remember loved ones from long ago? With a little creativity, you can easily adapt the following family history activities for family home evening:

Play “What is this thing?” Display antique items or find pictures of items that your ancestors likely used. Have your children guess what each item is and how it was used.

Map your ancestors’ travels. Using a map of the country where your ancestors lived, locate their places of residence. If they moved often, discuss their modes of travel. Children will enjoy marking locations with stickers or colored markers and drawing pictures depicting their ancestors’ travels.

Prepare to visit a family history center. Discuss which ancestors you would like to know more about. Before the visit, choose one or two ancestors who you

know are listed on the IGI or Ancestral File. Then watch as your children excitedly find them during their computer search. You can also create a similar activity at home by accessing the Church’s family history Web site at www.familysearch.org.

Plan an “old-games” night. Choose activities children did long ago. Make paper dolls or slingshots and practice shooting inanimate targets outside in a safe place. For additional ideas, invite grandparents to share their favorite childhood activities.

Make old-fashioned musical instruments. Because resources were often limited, immigrants

often devised their own musical instruments. With a little creativity, you can do the same. Strum an old washboard, clank a set of pots and pans, or clack an old pair of spoons between your knee and an open hand. Many household items make great “instruments.”

When we experience a small part of our ancestors’ lives, they become real to us—not just names and dates on a chart. Family history work then becomes personal as we help fulfill the prophecy to turn “the heart[s] of the children to their fathers” (Malachi 4:6).

*Sbarleen Wiser Peck,
Brighton Ward, Rochester
New York Stake*



vast life experiences, listen and respond politely. While it is important to share the visiting teaching message, be careful not to interrupt something your sister needs to say.

Introduce and include. When she attends Relief Society, be sure to sit

with her. Introduce her to the presidency, to the sisters sitting nearby, and to those who share her interests. Also invite her to join your circle of friends for other social occasions. If she has a spouse or children, introduce them to members

of the elders quorum, Primary, or Young Men and Young Women organizations.

Serve. Show you care throughout the year by sharing a start from your favorite plant, a batch of warm cookies, or a Church magazine. Especially meaningful are gifts of time. Try to help with something she needs to have done. Instead of saying, “Let us know if there is anything we can do,” offer assistance. If she’s been working in the yard, for instance, ask, “Could we help you plant your flowers?” Then let her decide if she’d like the help.

Uplift. Be optimistic in your visits. All of us experience challenges and need support from others. But as visiting teachers we should be careful about discussing our personal or family problems during visiting teaching. Focus on the sister’s needs, and if she needs a boost, contact her throughout the month with a short, unexpected phone call or a note of appreciation.

It is important that we reach out to everyone, and visiting teaching provides a wonderful way to do that. Stressing the importance of activation and retention, President Gordon B. Hinckley has said, “Put your arms around those who come into the Church and be friends to them and make them feel welcome and comfort them and we will see wonderful results” (“President Hinckley Urges More Missionary Work in Venezuela,” *Church News*, 14 Aug. 1999, 7).

Bunkie Griffith, Irvine Fourth Ward, Irvine California Stake

Out of a Job?

A few years ago, my husband lost his job unexpectedly. To compete with other qualified applicants during a weak economy, we had to be very proactive in our search. Losing a job is never easy, but after fasting, praying, and continuing to pay a full tithe, we gradually learned some key points for surviving financially and finding employment:

File for unemployment benefits.

Everyone's situation is different. Therefore, it's helpful to prioritize according to your needs. In the United States, it takes time to start receiving benefits. Contact your local unemployment office immediately to discuss your options.

Begin your job search immediately. Use as many sources as you can. Visit employment, recruiting, and temporary work agencies. Consult your ward or branch employment specialist, phone books, Internet sites, classified ads, and anyone you know who might be aware of job openings in your field.

Continue searching. Even if an interview goes well, continue to look for other opportunities. Being proactive will help you to avoid discouragement if the job is offered to someone else, and you won't lose valuable job-search time.

Follow up. Until the job has been filled, potential employers often appreciate knowing if you are still interested.

Research health insurance options. In some situations, your health insurance may not be affected, but if it is through a private company, it may be discontinued. If you still have health insurance, take care of any medical or dental needs quickly. To ensure continuous coverage for your family, discuss your options with an insurance agent, a professional organization, or your

school, if you are a student.

Be open-minded. You may need to accept a job that is not exactly what you hoped for or that requires relocating. Continuing to be optimistic will help you view the change as a new opportunity to enhance your career and to help your family grow.

As you search for a new job, stay busy, and try to maintain balance in your life. With persistence and the help of family and friends, you can do your part to successfully find new employment.

*Rebecca B. Davis, Everett Fourth Ward,
Everett Washington Stake*



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND



Members of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir perform in the decorated Conference Center during the First Presidency Christmas Devotional.

Knowing the Savior through Service Emphasized at Christmas Devotional

By Adam C. Olson, Church Magazines

In a devotional commemorating the birth of the Savior, members of the Church found themselves counseled not only on how to bring the Christmas spirit into “full bloom” through serving others, but how that spirit can be cultivated year-round by coming to know Jesus Christ.

“He is our Savior of whom the angel spoke that first Christmas Eve,” said President Gordon B. Hinckley. “He is our Redeemer, our Lord and our God. He is our King Immanuel, who has saved us when we have been powerless to save ourselves.”

From the Conference Center stage, nestled among lighted evergreens, the members of the First Presidency participated with the

Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the Orchestra at Temple Square in the annual First Presidency Christmas Devotional on 7 December 2003.

Knowing Jesus through Joseph

“My heart is mellow with a spirit of love as I look at this vast audience gathered in the Conference Center,” said President Hinckley, “and then think of the even larger number of you scattered over the earth. We are now an immense worldwide family of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ.”

President Hinckley honored the Prophet Joseph Smith—whose birthday is also celebrated during Christmastime—and his First Vision for contributing to

what we know about the Redeemer. “It is because of him, and his singular and remarkable experience, that we know the Savior as we do. . . .

“In that single, glorious vision, more knowledge was gained concerning the nature of Deity than had been obtained in all the endless discussions of men through the centuries. Though Joseph’s life was taken at an early age, his testimony of the Eternal God and the risen Lord lives on with luster and eloquence.”

Exhorting members to serve others as the Savior did, President Hinckley concluded, “I pray that the true spirit of Christmas will abide in the hearts of all and so touch our lives as to cause us to reach out in love toward

others, encouraging that goodness in the lives of men and women, which is the Spirit of Christ.”

The True Spirit of Christmas

“Giving, not getting, brings to full bloom the Christmas spirit,” taught President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency. The spirit of Christmas helps us become “more interested in people than things,” he said.

Teaching about the true spirit of Christmas, President Monson said, “To catch the real meaning of the ‘Spirit of Christmas,’ we need only drop the last syllable, and it becomes the ‘Spirit of Christ.’ When we have the spirit of Christmas, we remember Him whose birth we commemorate at this season of the year.”

As we turn our hearts outward, President Monson promised we will find that “opportunities to give of ourselves are indeed limitless,” but warned that “they are also perishable.”

Following the Savior will lead us to serve others, and serving others leads to knowing the Savior better. “If we are to have the very best Christmas ever, we must listen for the sound of sandaled feet. We must reach out for the Carpenter’s hand. With every step we take in His footsteps, we abandon a doubt and gain a truth. . . .

“One line of holy writ contains a tribute to our Lord and Savior, of whom it was said, ‘[He] went about doing good . . . for God was with him’ (Acts 10:38). My prayer is that



President Gordon B. Hinckley testified of Jesus Christ and His teachings, as well as of the Prophet Joseph Smith, at the devotional.

at this Christmas season and all the Christmastimes to come, we may follow in His footsteps. Then each Christmas will be the best Christmas ever."

The Challenge to Know Him

"The challenge is not only for us to know *about* the Savior, but to know *Him*," said President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. We come to know Him by serving Him, President Faust explained, quoting King Benjamin from the Book of Mormon: "For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?" (Mosiah 5:13).

"Christmas is more enjoyable when we think of the needs of others before we think of our own," said President Faust. "When the Savior sacrificed His life, He

was thinking of all others who have ever lived or who will ever live on this earth. He was not thinking of Himself when He went to Gethsemane, endured Golgotha, and triumphed over the tomb."

President Faust counseled that during "the busyness of the holidays, each of us should spend time in solitude reflecting upon the supernal gifts provided to us by the Savior's life and ministry. He was born for everyone. His death benefited everyone. He atoned for the sins of all mankind and, through His resurrection, liberated all mankind from death. . . .

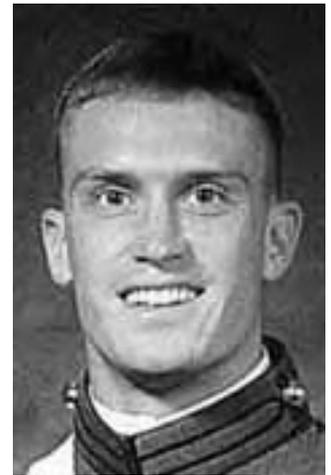
"The message of Christmas is not just a story of the birth in a stable, the Wise Men, the shepherds, or the flight into Egypt. The message of Christmas is also a celebration of the Atonement and the Resurrection that the birth of the Savior made possible." ■

Latter-day Saint Soldiers Killed in Iraq

Two Church members serving as soldiers in the U.S. Army were killed 17 November 2003 from non-hostile gunshot wounds in Baghdad, Iraq. Killed were U.S. Army Capt. Nathan S. Dalley, 27, and U.S. Army Capt. James A. Shull, 32.

Brother Dalley, a member of the Weracoba Ward, Columbus Georgia Stake, was engaged to be married at the time of his death. Brother Dalley was raised in Sandy, Utah. He was a member of the Army's Second Brigade, First Armored Division.

Brother Shull, a member of the Manhattan First Ward, Salina Kansas Stake, leaves behind his wife, Alice; and three children ages 7, 5, and 1. Brother Shull was raised in Washington State. He was a member of the Army's Third Brigade, First Armored Division. Brother Shull served a full-time mission in the Philippines. ■



Nathan S. Dalley



James A. Shull

Church, Colombian First Lady Team Up to Aid Needy

Lina Maria Moreno de Uribe, first lady of Colombia, and the South America North Area Presidency partnered in October 2003 to grant the gifts of seeing, hearing, and learning to some of Colombia's needy children and adults through donations.

The Church donated

funds to sponsor 60 corrective eye operations, 188 hearing aids, and 5,000 school desks. The donation is in partnership with three social programs sponsored by the first lady.

"We have made it possible for those who could not hear to hear, for those who could not see to see, and for

those who did not have a desk to write on to have one. This is a great satisfaction because with people of good will we can change the world,” said Elder Claudio R. M. Costa of the Seventy, President of the South America North Area.

The first lady, accompanied by members of the Area Presidency and their wives, presented the donations at the Alhambra Ward meetinghouse in Bogotá, Colombia. More than 250 people were in attendance, among them Church and government leaders, diplomats, media representatives, and members of the community.

One of the beneficiaries was Cristián Salas Tafur, a man from a town more than 1,000 kilometers (621 mi) from Bogotá, who expressed gratitude for the Church’s donations.

The gathering marked the first time a first lady of Colombia has visited a Latter-day Saint meetinghouse. Her husband, President Álvaro Uribe Vélez, later met with Elder Costa and Elder Roberto García, Area Authority Seventy and Second Counselor in the South America North Area Presidency, along with other local Church leaders, in his office.

“We know how hard Lina de Uribe works on behalf of high and noble causes, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has joined with her. This labor of love reflects ‘Our Savior’s Love,’ ” Elder Costa said, referring to a hymn performed by the choir at the meeting.

The first lady of Colombia expressed gratitude to the Church for its support of her

social programs. “Everything we are doing is worth doing,” she said.

Elder Costa presented the first lady with a quilt made by the Relief Society. ■

In the News

Search Ends For Body of Missing Missionary

A full-time missionary in Samoa is thought to have died in a flooding accident in November. Elder Michael Joshua Bent, from Minot, North Dakota, is missing and presumed dead after a search for his body was called off in mid-December.

Elder Bent was leaving a meeting with seven other missionaries when the van he was driving stalled while crossing a flood-swollen river that was deeper than expected. The force of the river rolled the van several times. The other seven missionaries escaped the vehicle and made their way to land. The flood swept Elder Bent downstream toward the ocean.

The family held memorial services for Elder Bent prior to Christmas. He had served in the field for 14 months at the time of the accident.

President Ezra Taft Benson Honored in Washington, D.C.

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), 13th President of the Church, and his legacy were honored at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., in November 2003. The ceremony celebrated the 50th anniversary of his being named Secretary of



President Ezra Taft Benson

Agriculture for the United States.

“Ezra Taft Benson stood on the solid bedrock of his principles. He fought for what he believed was right,” said current Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman.

President Benson, who was an ordained Apostle at the time of his appointment, served under United States President Dwight D. Eisenhower from 1953 to 1961. He is credited with implementing several changes in the Department of Agriculture that are still in place today.

Senator Gordon H. Smith of Oregon, who is a Latter-day Saint and whose father served with President Benson at the Department of Agriculture, noted, “I learned many things as a boy and as a man from [President] Benson. But the thing I suppose I learned most from him is that Latter-day Saints could live true to their faith while walking in high places.”

Saints Break Ground for New Samoa Temple

Nearly 1,000 people attended the groundbreaking ceremony on 19 October 2003 for the rebuilding of the Apia Samoa Temple. The groundbreaking took place just three months after the



The First Lady of Colombia kisses a girl who is about to receive hearing aids as part of a recent Church donation.

original temple was destroyed by fire.

“With the loss of that great temple, a great emptiness came upon the Saints of Samoa,” remarked Elder Dennis E. Simmons of the Seventy, First Counselor in the Pacific Islands Area Presidency. “We can now rejoice with you once again; on this site, a house will be erected to the Lord.”

Church leaders, government officials, and community leaders attended the ceremony, including Bishop Richard C. Edgley, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric; Elder Beaver T. Ho Ching, Area Authority Seventy; Daniel A. Betham, recently released as president of the Apia Samoa Temple; and the Prime Minister of Samoa, the Hon. Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi.

“The Lord loves the Samoan people. President Hinckley loves the Samoan people. Almost within a week of the burning of this temple, President Hinckley said . . . we will rebuild the

temple in Samoa,” Bishop Edgley told those attending the service. “These holy words ‘Holiness to the Lord’ will again hallow this sacred ground.”

Construction on the new temple is expected to take 18 to 24 months.

Choir and Its Broadcast Honored Nationally

As the Mormon Tabernacle Choir prepares to celebrate the 75th anniversary of its weekly broadcast *Music and the Spoken Word* in July 2004, the choir and the program are being honored.

United States President George W. Bush awarded the choir the National Medal of Arts in a special ceremony held in the White House on 12 November 2003. Mac Christensen, president of the choir, accepted the honor on behalf of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Craig Jessop, music director; Mack Wilberg, associate director; John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist; Stan Parrish, assistant to the choir president; and



The Mormon Tabernacle Choir recently received the United States’ highest artistic honor. The award was presented at the White House by President George W. Bush.

Lloyd Newell, announcer for *Music and the Spoken Word*, also attended the ceremony.

“We congratulate the choir on this significant national honor. The secret of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir is that its 360 members sing from their hearts. . . . We are grateful for this well-deserved recognition of their tremendous efforts,” said President Gordon B. Hinckley.

The National Medal of Arts is the nation’s highest honor for artistic excellence. The medal is awarded annually by the president of the United States to individuals and organizations that have made extraordinary contributions to the creation, support, and growth of the arts in the United States.

Music and the Spoken Word is also being honored. The program—the world’s longest-running continuous radio network program—will be inducted into the National Association of Broadcasters’ Hall of Fame on 20 April 2004.

Music and the Spoken Word began in July 1929 and has been broadcast weekly, with few exceptions, from the Tabernacle on Temple Square ever since.

Sisters in Sierra Leone “Catch the Vision”

Some 220 Relief Society sisters from the Freetown and Wellington Districts gathered in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on 4 October 2003 for their first women’s conference. The two-district conference, with a theme of “Love One Another—Catching the Vision of Relief Society,” included workshops, a reader’s theater, and lunch served by members of the priesthood.

The conference was initially planned to include the Bo District as well, but due to transportation costs, members in the Bo District, 175 miles from Freetown, held their own women’s conference locally on 13 September 2003. Some 200 sisters attended.



Church and community leaders break ground for the new Apia Samoa Temple. Nearly 1,000 attended the ceremony.

Two BYU Rugby Stars Play on National Team

Two members of the Brigham Young University rugby team represented the United States as members of the United States National Team during the 2003 Rugby World Cup in Brisbane, Australia, last November.

Kimball Kjar and Salesi Sika, both returned missionaries, competed during play at the World Cup. This was especially exciting for Brother Kjar, from Bountiful, Utah, because he returned to play in the same city where he served his mission.

"I always hoped on my mission that I would one day be able to see the Brisbane Temple completed. I never guessed that it would be rugby that would bring me back to my mission area," said Brother Kjar.

Brigham Young University in Provo is known for having an outstanding rugby program. "BYU was one of the first universities in the United States to have a rugby program, starting in 1962," said Jared Akenhead, BYU's rugby coach.

Brother Akenhead noted that rugby at BYU is a different experience from anywhere else in the world. "It's funny because rugby players from around the world have the reputation of being hooligans, yet here at BYU it is the complete opposite," he said. "We pray before every game and obey the Word of Wisdom. Eighty percent of the team members have been on missions, and the other 20 percent are planning on going. The

national championships are held on Sundays, which excludes BYU from participating, yet we still get to play the best teams in the

nation, and we are still regarded as being one of the best." ■

Church News contributed to these reports.

Strengthening the Community

Service Project Helps Afghanistan's Orphans

What started with a simple request in a letter sent home from Afghanistan turned into a community effort throughout the Texas Panhandle in the United States.

Lieutenant Colonel David Lowe of the Amarillo Fourth Ward, Amarillo Texas Stake, is serving in Afghanistan and helping to rebuild schools. He sent a letter home to his wife, Suzanne, describing the extreme poverty of the country and the overwhelming number of orphans who are cared for in government-run institutions. He told her that some children in Afghanistan walk 10 miles to the nearest school through land that varies in elevation from 1,400

to 7,000 feet. He visited one orphanage that housed at least 1,200 children.

Brother Lowe suggested to his wife that a young man in the Amarillo Fourth Ward might undertake an Eagle Scout project to gather school supplies, warm hats, and gloves for the children of Afghanistan. Sister Lowe told others of her husband's idea, and soon a stake-wide effort was organized to gather 1,200 school bags filled with school supplies, warm hats, and mittens.

Elementary school children spent a day making hats and bags for the project. Local businesses in Amarillo provided discounted goods or donated items for the school bags.



Orphans in Afghanistan received donations of school supplies and winter gear gathered by Church members in Texas and distributed by a Latter-day Saint serviceman.

The humanitarian project culminated on 18 October 2003 with a women's conference held at the Amarillo Stake Center. Completed school kits were gathered at the conference and shipped to Afghanistan. Brother Lowe plans to distribute the school kits as he travels through the country rebuilding schools. *Adapted from Church News, 25 October 2003.*

Philippine Saints Celebrate National Family Week

As part of the Philippines' National Family Week in September 2003, Latter-day Saints from the Toledo Philippines District, Philippines Cebu Mission, joined with their community in celebrating the family and emphasizing the importance of family history and family unity through family home evening. The Philippines Area Presidency asked a local committee to involve the community and members of the district branches in an activity to inform the community about family home evening and family history.

On the morning of 27 September 2003, Church members, friends, and full-time missionaries walked together in a parade with the Toledo Private Drummers and Buglers. The district presidency carried a banner displaying the theme, "The Home: Cradle of Culture and Values." Participants marched from the meetinghouse to the heart of the city and back to the chapel as an opening to the day's activities. All 11 branches in the district

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CHURCH NEWS



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ELDER WAYNE J. RICHEY

Members in the Toledo Philippines District helped celebrate Philippines' National Family Week with events emphasizing family home evening and family history.

and all of the missionaries supported the events.

After the parade, members and friends met at the meetinghouse for a special program. The Toledo District Choir sang the national anthem and also the Family Week theme song, "Isang Piraso ng Langit," composed by Mon Del Rosario.

Guest speaker Mayor Arlene Espinosa Zambo encouraged the audience to help make Toledo City a good place to live and thanked the Church for supporting National Family Week.

The district presidency awarded several members and families certificates in recognition of their exemplary attitudes. District President Yolando R. Cotejo challenged every family member to live as a good example.

Latter-day Saints and community members were then invited to visit the local family

history center and learn how to trace their ancestors.

Library Books and Funds Donated in the Outback

Members of the Penrith Australia Stake spent 2003 raising funds to build a book collection for a library in Australia's Northern Territory.

Tania Ligertwood of the Penrith Australia Stake suggested the "Building a Library in the Outback" project after traveling to some of the outlying areas of Australia and seeing many small schools with almost no library facilities.

In January, wards in the stake began collecting money for the project. Stake leaders asked the Alice Springs School of the Air to compile a list of needed books and supplies. Church members recently donated 150 books to the school.

School officials "were bewildered at such a generous offer from people they do

not even know and were very grateful that their school had been chosen as the recipient of such a kind gesture," said Marianne Walters, Penrith Australia Stake Relief Society president.

Adapted from Church News, 8 November 2003.

Church Provides Water for Liberian Refugee Camp

LDS Charities presented two new and functioning wells, called boreholes, to the Buduburam Liberian Refugee Camp in September 2003.

"This gift is made possible from donations from many throughout the world. It will give you the feeling of our Savior's love for us," Elder Derl Walker, a full-time

missionary representing LDS Charities, said at the presentation. "We all need to remember what the Savior said to the woman at the well, that He would give her living water from which she would never thirst."

The new wells mark the first useful boreholes at the refugee camp, which accommodates approximately 75,000 people. The water can be used for drinking and cooking.

In accepting the gift for the camp, welfare council chairman Francis Hinnah said, "We are grateful you are helping lift the burden from us. On behalf of the Liberians at the camp, we thank you." ■

Comment

A Worldwide Church

"Tips for Preparing Your Missionary" in the October 2003 *Ensign* (page 72) was addressed primarily to teenager preparation. The article made me feel humble. I had heard the seven points presented before in various ways, but what touched my heart was that I expected the article to have been written by someone in Utah or Idaho, when in fact it was written by someone in Nigeria. I have read articles about the Church's activities around the world, but this article brought it home to me: The gospel is true no matter where we live. Gary M. Warden, Oak Harbor Third Ward, Mount Vernon Washington Stake

The Reason for the Season

I subscribe to two other magazines besides the *Ensign*, and I enjoyed reading their December articles about how to decorate for the holidays, fun Christmas recipes, great gift ideas, and Christmas crafts. When I opened this month's *Ensign*, however, every article reminded me of what the meaning and focus of this season really should be. Not

only is Jesus "the reason for the season," as the popular saying goes, He is simply the Reason—the reason we are here, can live happily, and be together as families forever. Thank you for reminding me this month and every month.

Laurie Wirz, Sand Creek Ward, Colorado Springs Colorado East Stake

Becoming a Full-Time Mom

Sister Randalls speaks from the heart (see "Mom, Are You There?" *Ensign*, October 2003, 68). This is one of the best articles I have seen written by a Church member. It spoke volumes to my heart, and I am yielding to the enticements of the Spirit to gradually work toward becoming a full-time mom. Learning that my teenagers and unmarried children need me now as much as they did when they were small has been one of the most significant and unexpected lessons I've discovered in my journey as a mother.

Luci Olsen, Young Ward, Mendon Utah Stake



MAKING THE MOST OF THIS ISSUE

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 0 4

strengthen our relationships with others. For one man's perspective, see "Blessings upon Our Heads," page 16.

Remembering to be Thankful

"Thank you, Brother. I really needed that." This heartfelt expression of gratitude so touched Elder Stephen A. West of the Seventy that it changed his thinking and behavior. See "Five Small Experiences," page 60.

Paying the Price

What would cause a person to be on his knees in prayer at "the breaking of the day" every day for 12 weeks? Have you ever needed a blessing so desperately? President Spencer W. Kimball did. Find out more on page 50.

Especially for Parents

• What can you do when the children you love reject the teachings of the gospel you love? One mother tells how she deals with her own feelings and with the children whose lifestyles are so foreign to what she taught them. See "I Won't Give Up on Them," page 44.

• Am I the best husband and father I can be? And just what does it mean to preside righteously in the home? Elder Yasuo Niiyama, an Area Authority Seventy, offers helpful insights on these important questions, page 22.

Teaching from the Book of Mormon

"There are four things I try to do when I teach the scriptures: read, prove, prepare, and testify," says Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He elaborates on these steps in "The Book of Mormon Will Change Your Life," page 8.

Blessings of Hymn Singing

Hymns can comfort us, instruct us, and even help

Roommates, Rules, and Reality

Are you a young single adult with roommates whose standards are different from yours? How can you help maintain a positive atmosphere in your apartment? See page 56.



Latter-day Blessings

Blessings come in all shapes and sizes: an unexplainable warning over a police radio, 100 active members resulting from one chance contact by a missionary 45 years earlier, a dream that leads to a family history treasure, and a plate of muffins that changes the life of the giver as well as the receiver. See "Latter-day Saint Voices," page 66.

Home Teachers, Visiting Teachers

Find your monthly messages on pages 2 and 65.

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A Site for Sore Eyes



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The family is the basic unit of the Church, so righteous behavior within the home is vital. Indeed it is central to our personal progress and the spiritual progress of our families.” See Elder Yasuo Niityama, “Presiding Righteously in the Home,” p. 22.