

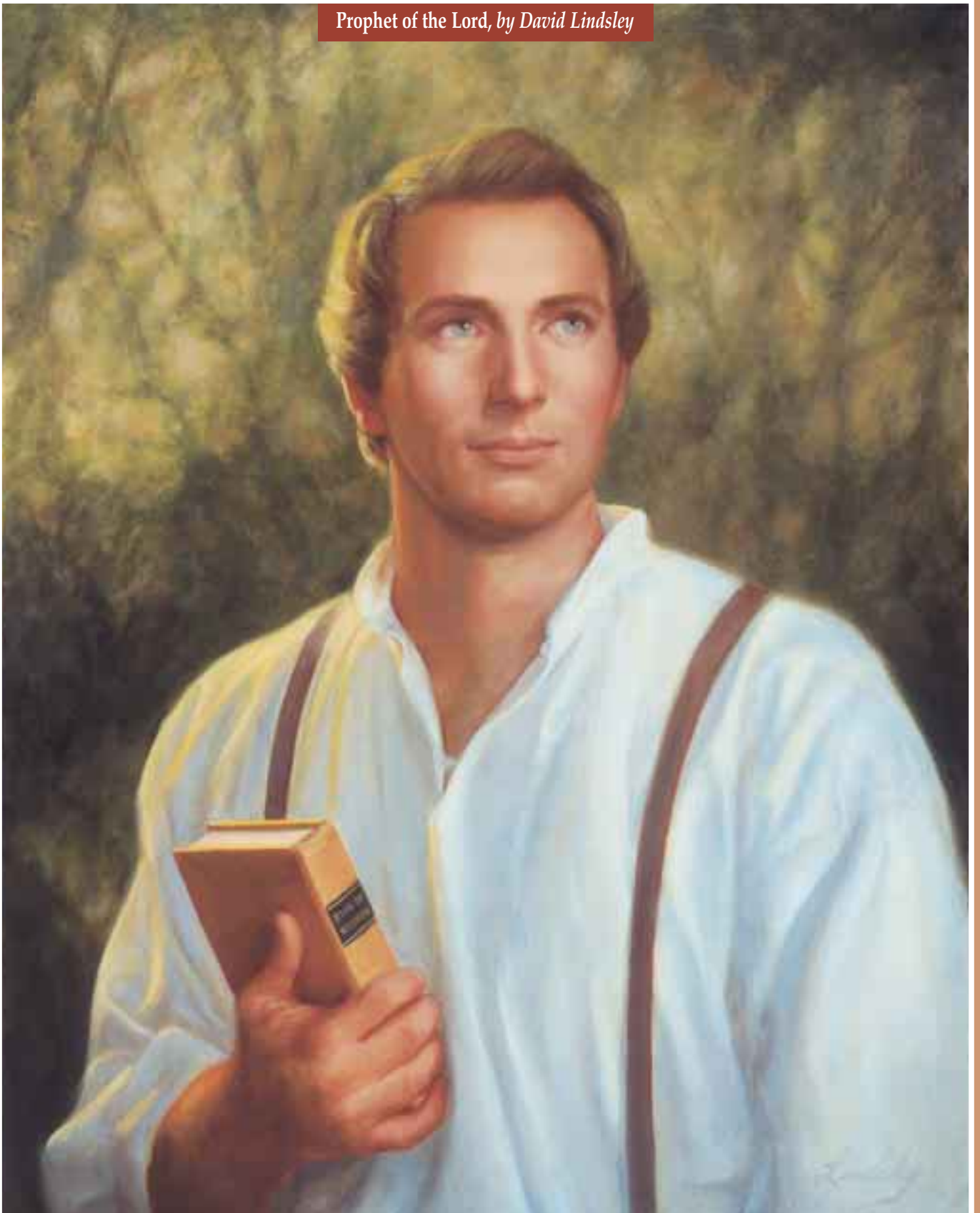
ENSIGN



Focus on the
Restoration, pp. 18–58

Strengthening
Your Marriage, p. 64

Prophet of the Lord, by David Lindsley



“He has translated the book, . . . and as your Lord and your God liveth it is true” (D&C 17:6), the Lord said of the work of the Prophet Joseph Smith in bringing forth the Book of Mormon. “Thou shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, . . . through the will of God the Father, and the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ” (D&C 21:1).

ENSIGN

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 1

ON THE COVERS: *Front*: "Joseph, This Is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" by Leon Parson, oil on canvas, 25" x 47", 1999. Courtesy of Museum of Church History and Art, Fifth International Art Competition. *Inside front*: Prophet of the Lord, by David Lindsley, oil on linen, 24" x 30", 2000. *Inside back*: Pastoral Scene near the Birthplace of Joseph Smith, by Frank Magleby, oil on gesso panel, 30" x 40", 1994.

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The Ensign (preferred pronunciation: N' sign, not N' sun) will consider unsolicited manuscripts and art, but submissions must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope if return delivery is desired. Unsolicited manuscripts and comments may also be submitted via e-mail at cur-editorial-ensign@ldschurch.org. We encourage interested authors to see "Call for Articles," printed from time to time in "Comment."

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TO SUBSCRIBE: Send \$10.00 U.S. check or money order to Church Magazines (see address below). Subscription help line: 1-800-537-5971. Credit card orders (American Express, MasterCard, Visa) may be taken by phone.

Audiocassettes: Individuals with visual impairment or physical disability may obtain half-speed, four-track audiocassettes of the magazine. These are available monthly free of charge or through donations. Write to: Ensign Talking Book (see address below) or call 1-800-537-5971.

Regular issues are to reach U.S. and Canadian subscribers by the first of the month, May and November general conference issues about two weeks later.

NOTICE OF ADDRESS CHANGES: Sixty days' notice required. Include address label from a recent issue; old address, as well as new address, is needed.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Salt Lake Distribution Center, Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, Utah 84126-0368, United States of America.

CANADA POST INFORMATION: Publication Agreement #1604791

2 FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

A PROPHET'S COUNSEL AND PRAYER FOR YOUTH
 President Gordon B. Hinckley

12 WEIGHTIER MATTERS Elder Dallin H. Oaks

18 INSEPARABLE WITNESSES OF JESUS CHRIST

Elder John M. Madsen

24 A LATTER-DAY TESTAMENT OF BIBLICAL TRUTH

Rex C. Reeve Jr.

30 A MISSION LONG FOREKNOWN W. Jeffrey Marsh

37 "TAKE HEED CONTINUALLY": PROTECTING

THE GOLD PLATES Andrew H. Hedges

44 CRADLE OF THE RESTORATION

52 FAITHFUL FROM THE FIRST Donald L. Enders

59 DEBT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE FOREVER Bernard Poduska

64 WHAT WE DID TO STRENGTHEN OUR MARRIAGE

68 LATTER-DAY SAINT VOICES

HOW THE BOOK OF MORMON FOUND ME Kwame Opare

"PLEASE HELP IT STOP BLEEDING" Janis Johnson Farrell

CHARITY AND THE CYCLOPS CAKE Nikki O. Nelson

AFTER 20 YEARS, INDIFFERENT NO MORE Félix López Marchán

I FELT COMFORT—BUT WHY? Alan L. Olsen

74 VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

PUTTING ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

75 RANDOM SAMPLER

76 NEWS OF THE CHURCH



DEBT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE FOREVER, p. 59

WEIGHTIER MATTERS, p. 12



A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

I think there never before was a meeting anything like this in this Church. There are so many of you here tonight. How good you look.

Some of you have come with doubts. Some have come with high expectations. I want you to know that I have been on my knees asking the Lord to bless me with the power and the capacity and the language to reach into your hearts.

Beyond this hall are hundreds of thousands of others who are participating with us. To each of you I say welcome. I am glad for this tremendous opportunity to speak to you, and I recognize how important it is.

I am now old in years—90 plus. I have lived a long time, and I have lived with great love for the young men and young women of this Church. What a truly wonderful group you are. You speak various languages. You are all part of a great family. But you are also individuals, each with his or her problems, each wishing for answers to the things that perplex you and worry you. How we love you and pray constantly for the genius to help you. Your lives are filled with difficult decisions and with dreams and hopes and longings to find that which will bring you peace and happiness.

Once upon a time, a very long time ago, I was your age. I didn't worry about drugs or pornography because they were not available then. I worried about school and where it would lead. It was the season of the terrible economic depression. I worried about how to earn a living. I served a mission after I finished the university. I went to England. We traveled by train to Chicago, made a bus transfer across that city, and



went on to New York, where we caught a steamship for the British Isles. While riding the transfer bus in Chicago, a woman said to the driver, "What is that building ahead?" He said, "Ma'am, that is the Chicago Board of Trade Building. Every week some man who has lost his fortune jumps out of one of those windows. He has nothing else to live for."

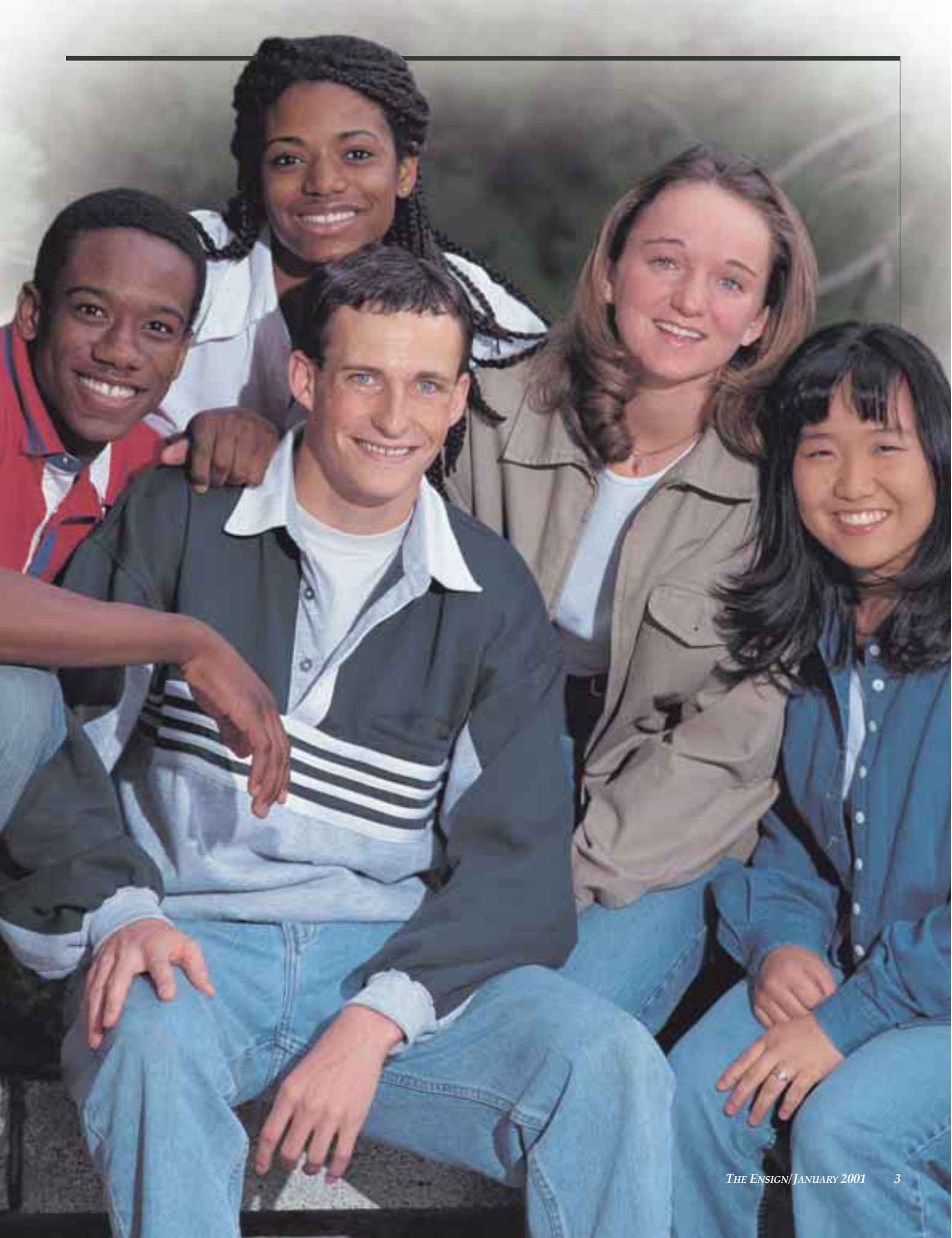
Such were the times. They were mean and ugly. No one who did not live through that period will ever un-

derstand it fully. I hope with all my heart we never have anything like it again.

Now, here you are on the threshold of your mature lives. You too worry about school. You worry about marriage. You worry about many things. I make you a promise that God will not forsake you if you will walk in His paths with the guidance of His commandments.

This is the age of great opportunity. You are so fortunate to be alive. Never in the history of mankind has life been filled with so many opportunities and challenges. When I was born, the average life expectancy of a man or woman in the United States and other Western countries was 50 years. Now it is more than 75 years. Can you imagine that? On average you may expect to live at least 25 years longer than someone who lived in 1910.

This is the season of an explosion of knowledge. For instance, when I was your age there were no antibiotics. All of these wonderful medicines have been discovered and refined in more recent times. Some of the great scourges of the earth are gone. Smallpox once took whole populations. That is gone entirely. It is a





Youth and young adults in Bogotá, Colombia, watch the live broadcast of President Hinckley's fireside.

miracle. Polio was once the dreaded fear of every mother. I remember going to visit a man with polio in the county hospital. He was in a great iron lung that moved his own lungs as it pumped up and down. There was no hope for him; he couldn't breathe on his own. He died, leaving his wife and children. This terrible disease is now gone. That too is a miracle. And so it is with other matters.

Of course you face challenges. Every generation that has ever walked the earth has faced challenges. We could spend the entire evening talking about them. But of all the challenges that have been faced in the past, the ones we have today, I believe, are most easily handled. I say that because they are manageable. They largely involve individual behavioral decisions, but those decisions can be made and followed. And when that happens, the challenge is behind us.

I suppose that most of you are in school. I am pleased that you have that opportunity and that desire. I hope that you are studying diligently and that your great ambition is to get A grades in your various courses. I hope your teachers will be generous toward you and that your studies will yield top grades and an excellent education. I could wish nothing better for you in your schoolwork.

Tonight I am going to let your teachers give you the A's that I hope you earn. I want to talk about some B's. You get the A's; I will give you the B's.

1. *Be grateful.*
2. *Be smart.*
3. *Be clean.*
4. *Be true.*
5. *Be humble.*
6. *Be prayerful.*

Why don't you repeat these B's with me, and then we will talk about each of them, all right?

1. *Be grateful.*
2. *Be smart.*
3. *Be clean.*
4. *Be true.*
5. *Be humble.*
6. *Be prayerful.*

Be grateful. There are two little words in the English language that perhaps mean more than all others. They are "thank you." Comparable words are found in every other language, such as *gracias*, *merci*, *danke*, *obrigado*, *domo*.

The habit of saying thank you is the mark of an educated man or woman. With whom is the Lord displeased? He names "those who confess not his hand in all things" (D&C 59:21). That is, those who walk without grateful expression. Walk with gratitude in your hearts, my dear friends. Be thankful for the wonderful blessings which are yours. Be grateful for the tremendous opportunities that you have. Be thankful to your parents, who care so very much about you and who have worked so very hard to provide for you. Let them know that you are grateful. Say thank you to your mother and your father. Say thank you to your friends. Say thank you to your teachers. Express appreciation to everyone who does you a favor or assists you in any way.

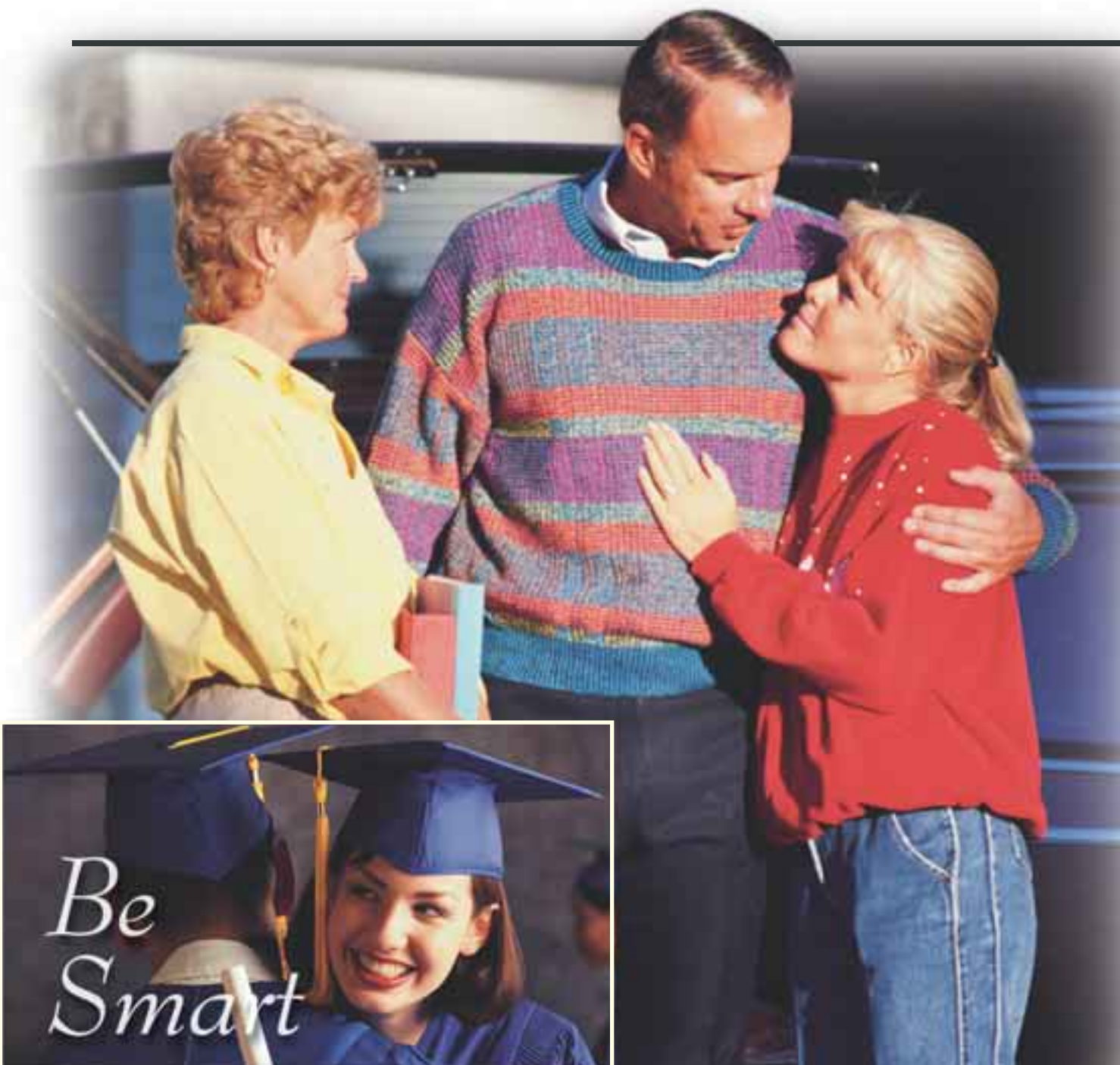
Thank the Lord for His goodness to you. Thank the Almighty for His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who has done for you what none other in all this world could do. Thank Him for His great example, for His tremendous teachings, for His outreaching hand to lift and help. Think about the meaning of His Atonement. Read about Him and read His words in the New Testament and in 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon. Read them quietly to yourself and then ponder them. Pour out your heart to your Father in Heaven in gratitude for the gift of His Beloved Son.

Thank the Lord for His marvelous Church restored in this great season of history. Thank Him for all that it offers you. Thank Him for friends and loved ones, for parents and brothers and sisters, for family. Let a spirit of thanksgiving guide and bless your days and nights. Work at it. You will find it will yield wonderful results.

B number two—*be smart.*

You are moving into the most competitive age the world has ever known. All around you is competition. You need all the education you can get. Sacrifice a car; sacrifice anything that is needed to be sacrificed to qualify yourselves to do the work of the world. That world will in large measure pay you what it thinks you are worth, and your worth will increase as you gain education and proficiency in your chosen field.

You belong to a church that teaches the importance of education. You have a mandate from the Lord to educate your minds and your hearts and your hands. The Lord has said, "Teach ye diligently . . . of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge



Be Grateful

also of countries and of kingdoms—that ye may be prepared in all things” (D&C 88:78–80).

Mind you, these are not my words. These are the words of the Lord who loves you. He wants you to train your minds and hands to become an influence for good as you go forward with your lives. And as you do so and as you perform honorably and with excellence, you will bring honor to the Church, for

you will be regarded as a man or woman of integrity and ability and conscientious workmanship. Be smart. Don't be foolish. You cannot bluff or cheat others without bluffing or cheating yourselves.

Many years ago I worked for a railroad in the central offices in Denver. I was in charge of what is called head-end traffic. That was in the days when nearly everyone rode passenger trains. One morning

I received a call from my counterpart in Newark, New Jersey. He said, "Train number such-and-such has arrived, but it has no baggage car. Somewhere, 300 passengers have lost their baggage, and they are mad."

I went immediately to work to find out where it may have gone. I found it had been properly loaded and properly trained in Oakland, California. It had been moved to our railroad in Salt Lake City, been

carried to Denver, down to Pueblo, put on another line, and moved to St. Louis. There it was to be handled by another railroad which would take it to Newark, New Jersey. But some thoughtless switchman in the St. Louis yards moved a small piece of steel just three inches, a switch point, then pulled the lever to uncouple the car. We discovered that a baggage car that belonged in Newark, New Jersey,



Be True

was in fact in New Orleans, Louisiana—1,500 miles from its destination. Just the three-inch movement of the switch in the St. Louis yard by a careless employee had started it on the wrong track, and the distance from its true destination increased dramatically. That is the way it is with our lives. Instead of following a steady course, we are pulled by some mistaken idea in another direction. The movement away from our original destination may be ever so small, but, if continued, that very small movement becomes a great gap and we find ourselves far from where we intended to go.

Have you ever looked at one of those 16-foot farm gates? When it is opened, it swings very wide. The end at the hinges moves ever so slightly, while out at the perimeter the movement is great. It is the little things upon which life turns that make the big difference in our lives, my dear young friends.

Be smart. The Lord wants you to educate your minds and hands, whatever your chosen field. Whether it be repairing refrigerators, or the work of a skilled surgeon, you must train yourselves. Seek for the best schooling available. Become a workman of integrity in the world that lies ahead of you. I repeat, you will bring honor to the Church and you will be generously blessed because of that training.

There can be no doubt, none whatever, that education pays. Do not short-circuit your lives. If you do so, you will pay for it over and over and over again.

The third B—*be clean*. We live in a world that is filled with filth and sleaze, a world that reeks of evil. It is all around us. It is on the television screen. It is at the movies. It is in the popular literature. It is on the Internet. You can't afford to watch it, my dear friends. You cannot afford to let that filthy poison touch you. Stay away from it. Avoid it. You can't rent videos and watch them as they portray degrading things. You young men who hold the priesthood of God cannot mix this filth with the holy priesthood.

Avoid evil talk. Do not take the name of the Lord in vain. From the thunders of Sinai the finger of the Lord wrote on tablets of stone, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (Ex. 20:7).

It is not a mark of manhood to carelessly use the name of the Almighty or His Beloved Son in a vain and flippant way, as many are prone to do.

Choose your friends carefully. It is they who will lead you in one direction or the other. Everybody wants friends. Everybody needs friends. No one wishes to be without them. But never lose sight of the fact that it is your friends who will lead you along the paths that you will follow.

While you should be friendly with all people, select with great care those whom you wish to have close to you. They will be your safeguards in situations where you may vacillate between choices, and you in turn may save them.



PHOTO BY MATT REBER

Choose your friends carefully. It is they who will lead you in one direction or the other. . . . They will be your safeguards in situations where you may vacillate between choices, and you in turn may save them.

Be clean. Don't waste your time in destructive entertainment. There was recently held in the Salt Lake Valley a show put on by a traveling band. I am told that it was filthy, that it was lascivious, that it was evil in every respect. The young people of this community had paid \$25 to \$35 to get in. What did they get for their money? Only a seductive voice urging them to move in the direction of the slimy things of life. I plead with you, my friends, to stay away from such. It will not help you. It can only injure you.

I recently spoke to your mothers and your fathers. Among other things, I talked with them about tattoos.

What creation is more magnificent than the human body? What a wondrous thing it is as the crowning work of the Almighty.

Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, said: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:16–17).

Did you ever think that your body is holy? You are a child of God. Your body is His creation. Would you disfigure that creation with portrayals of people, animals, and words painted into your skin?

I promise you that the time will come, if you have tattoos, that you will regret your actions. They cannot be washed off. They are permanent. Only by an expensive and painful process can they be removed. If you are tattooed, then probably for the remainder of your life you will carry it with you. I believe the time will come when it will be an embarrassment to you. Avoid it. We, as your Brethren who love you, plead with you not to become so disrespectful of the body which the Lord has given you.

May I mention earrings and rings placed in other parts of the body. These are not manly. They are not attractive. You young men look better without them, and I believe you will feel better without them. As for the young women, you do not need to drape rings up and down your ears. One modest pair of earrings is sufficient.



PHOTO BY MATT REHER

I must also say a word concerning illicit drugs. . . . They will destroy you if pursued. You will become their slave.

I mention these things because again they concern your bodies.

How truly beautiful is a well-groomed young woman who is clean in body and mind. She is a daughter of God in whom her Eternal Father can take pride. How handsome is a young man who is well groomed. He is a son of God, deemed worthy of holding the holy priesthood of God. He does not need tattoos or earrings on or in his body. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve are all united in counseling against these things.

And while I speak of such matters I want to give emphasis again to the matter of pornography. It has become a \$10 billion industry in the United States, where a few men grow rich at the expense of thousands upon thousands who are their victims. Stay away from it. It is exciting, but it will destroy you. It will warp your senses. It will build within you an appetite that you will do anything to appease. And don't try to create associations through the Internet and chat rooms. They can lead you down into the very abyss of sorrow and bitterness.

I must also say a word concerning illicit drugs. You know how I feel about them. I don't care what the variety may be. They will destroy you if pursued. You will become their slave. Once in their power, you will do anything to get money to buy more.

I was amazed while watching a television program to learn that parents introduced drugs to their children in 20 percent of the cases. I cannot understand what I regard as the stupidity of these parents. What future other than slavery for their children could they see in them? Illegal drugs will utterly destroy those who become addicted to them.

My advice, my pleading to you wonderful young men and women, is to stay entirely away from them. You don't need to experiment with them. Look about you and see the effects they have had on others. There is no need for any Latter-day Saint boy or girl, young man or young woman, to even try them. Stay clean from these mind-altering and habit-forming addictions.

And now just a word on the most common and most difficult of all problems for you young men and

young women to handle. It is the relationship that you have one with another. You are dealing with the most powerful of human instincts. Only the will to live possibly exceeds it.

The Lord has made us attractive one to another for a great purpose. But this very attraction becomes as a powder keg unless it is kept under control. It is beautiful when handled in the right way. It is deadly if it gets out of hand.

It is for this reason that the Church counsels against early dating. This rule is not designed to hurt you in any way. It is designed to help you, and it will do so if you will observe it.

Steady dating at an early age leads so often to tragedy. Studies have shown that the longer a boy and girl date one another, the more likely they are to get into trouble.

It is better, my friends, to date a variety of companions until you are ready to marry. Have a wonderful time, but stay away from familiarity. Keep your hands to yourself. It may not be easy, but it is possible.

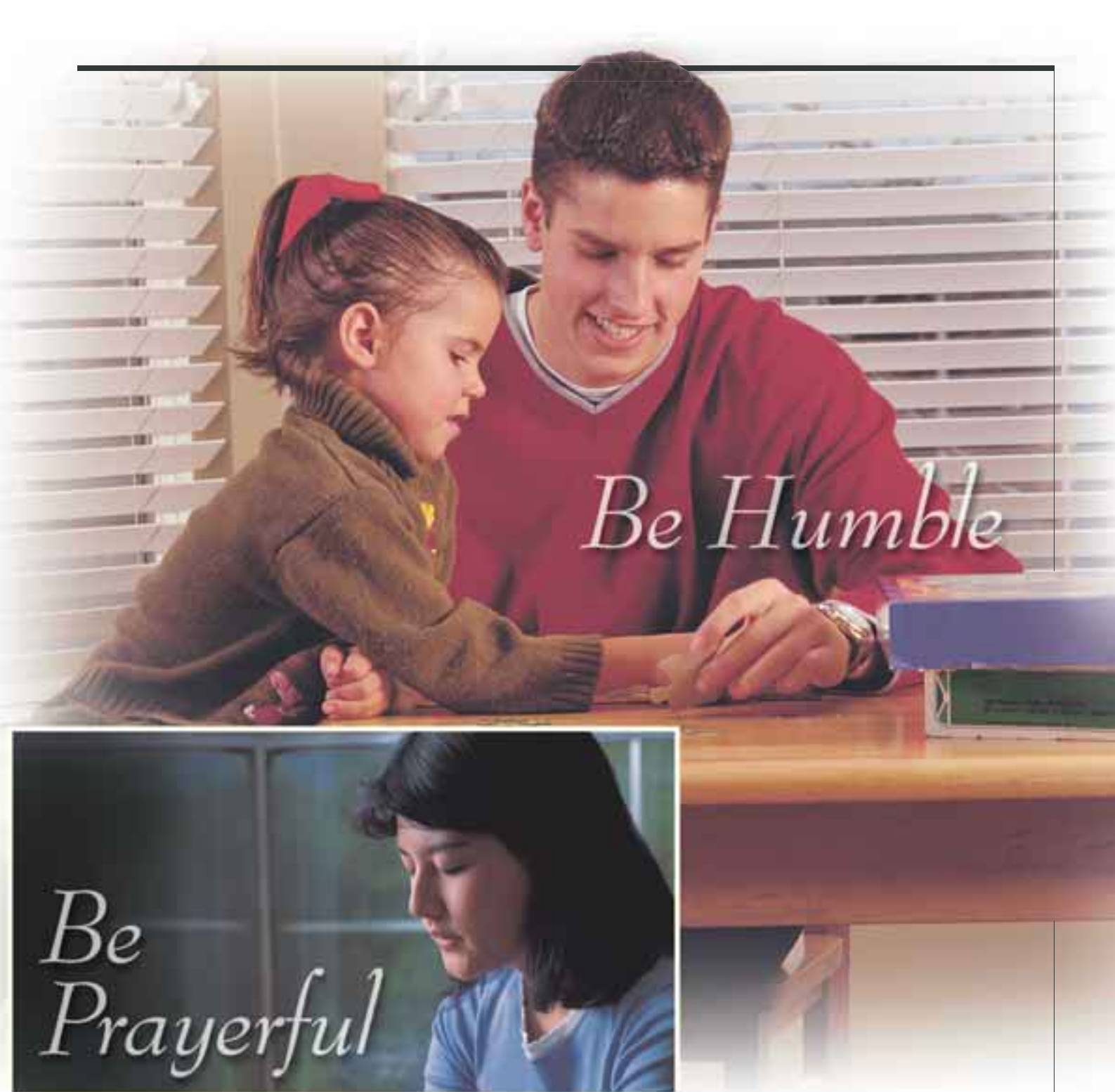
You young men who plan to go on missions must recognize that sexual sin may keep you from that opportunity. You may think that you can hide it. Long experience has shown that you cannot. To serve an effective mission you must have the Spirit of the Lord, and truth withheld does not mix with that Spirit. Sooner or later you will feel compelled to confess your earlier transgressions. Well did Sir Galahad say, "My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure" (Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Sir Galahad* [1842], st. 1).

My dear young friends, in matters of sex you know what is right. You know when you are walking on dangerous ground, when it is so easy to stumble and slide into the pit of transgression. I plead with you to be careful, to stand safely back from the cliff of sin over which it is so easy to fall. Keep yourselves clean from the dark and disappointing evil of sexual transgression. Walk in the sunlight of that peace which comes from obedience to the commandments of the Lord.

Now, if there be any who have stepped over the line, who may already have transgressed, is there any hope for you? Of course there is. Where there is true repentance, there will be forgiveness. That process begins with prayer. The Lord has said, "He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more" (D&C 58:42). Share your burden with your parents if you can. And by all means, confess to your bishop, who stands ready to help you.

My next B—*be true*.

Said Shakespeare, "To thine own self be true; and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man" (*Hamlet*, I, iii, 78–81). You have a tremendous inheritance. You have a great background of noble ancestry. Many of you are descendants of the pioneers, who died by the hundreds



Be Humble

Be Prayerful

and thousands in testimony of the truth of this work. If they were to look down upon you, they would plead with you: "Be true. Be loyal. Be true to the faith that our parents have cherished, true to the truth for which martyrs have perished." They would say, "Faith of our fathers, holy faith, we will be true to thee till death" (*Hymns*, nos. 254 and 84).

And those of you who may not be descended from pioneer ancestry, you belong to a church which has been made strong by the loyalty and unwavering

affection of its members through the generations. What a marvelous thing it is to belong to a society whose purposes are noble, whose accomplishments are tremendous, whose work is uplifting, even heroic. Be loyal to the Church under all circumstances. I make you a promise that the authorities of this Church will never lead you astray. They will lead you in paths of happiness.

You who are members of this Church must have a loyalty to it. This is your church. You have as great



PHOTO BY MATT REIER

a responsibility in your sphere of action as I have in my sphere of action. It belongs to you just as it belongs to me. You have embraced its gospel. You have taken upon yourselves a covenant in the waters of baptism. This you have renewed each time you have partaken of the sacrament. These covenants will be added to when you are married in the temple. You cannot hold them lightly. They are too great a thing. This is the very work of God designed to bring about the immortality and eternal life of His sons and daughters.

Walk in faith before Him with your heads high, proud of your membership in this great cause and kingdom which He has restored to the earth in this, the last dispensation of the fulness of times. Why? To bring you happiness.

Be true to your own convictions. You know what is right, and you know what is wrong. You know when you are doing the proper thing. You know when you are giving strength to the right cause. Be loyal. Be faithful. Be true, my beloved associates in this great kingdom.

The fifth B—*be humble*.

There is no place for arrogance in our lives. There is no place for conceit. There is no place for egotism. We have a great work to do. We have things to accomplish. We need direction in the pursuit of our education. We need help in choosing an eternal companion.

The Lord has said, “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10).

Walk in faith before Him with your heads high, proud of your membership in this great cause and kingdom which He has restored to the earth.

What a tremendous promise is given in this statement. If we are without conceit and pride and arrogance, if we are humble and obedient, then the Lord will lead us by the hand and answer our prayers. What greater thing could we ask for? There is nothing to compare with this.

The Savior, in the great Sermon on the Mount, declared, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5).

I believe the meek and the humble are those who are teachable. They are willing to learn. They are willing to listen to the whisperings of the still, small voice for guidance in their lives. They place the wisdom of the Lord above their own wisdom.

And this leads to my final B—*be prayerful*.

You cannot do it alone. I look at this vast congregation, and I know that you are young people who pray, who get on your knees and speak with the Lord. You know that He is the source of all wisdom.

You need His help, and you know that you need His help. You cannot do it alone. You will come to realize that and recognize that more and more as the years pass. So live that in good conscience you can speak with the Lord. Get on your knees and thank Him for His goodness to you and express to Him the righteous desires of your hearts. The miracle of it all is that He hears. He responds. He answers—not always as we might wish He would answer, but there is no question in my mind that He answers.

You have such a tremendous responsibility, you young men and young women. You are the products of all of the generations that have gone before you. All that you have of body and mind has been passed to you through your parents. Someday you will become parents and pass on to succeeding generations the qualities of body and mind which you have received from the past. Do not break the chain of the generations of your family. Keep it bright and strong. So very much depends on you. You are so very precious. You mean so much to this Church. It could not be the same without you. Stand tall, proud of your inheritance as sons and daughters of God. Look to Him for understanding and guidance. Walk according to His precepts and commandments.

You can have a good time. Of course you can! We want you to have fun. We want you to enjoy life. We do not want you to be prudes. We want you to be robust and cheerful, to sing and dance, to laugh and be happy.

But in so doing, be humble and be prayerful, and the smiles of heaven will fall upon you.

I could wish for you nothing better than that your lives be fruitful, that your service be dedicated and freely given, that you contribute to the knowledge and the well-being of the world in which you live, and that you do it humbly and faithfully before your God. He loves you. We love you. We want you to be happy and successful, to make significant contributions to the world in which you will live and to the on-rolling of this great and majestic work of the Lord.

Well, my brothers and sisters, those are my B's—be grateful, be smart, be clean, be true, be humble, be prayerful.

Now, in conclusion, I offer a word of prayer concerning you.

O God, our Eternal Father, as Thy servant I bow before Thee in prayer in behalf of these young people scattered over the earth who are gathered tonight in assemblies everywhere. Please smile with favor upon them. Please listen to them as they lift their voices in prayer unto Thee. Please lead them gently by the hand in the direction they should follow.

Please help them to walk in paths of truth and righteousness and keep them from the evils



PHOTO BY CRAIG DIMOND

O God, our Eternal Father, . . . keep [these young people] on the high road that leads to achievement. Save them from the mistakes that could destroy them.

of the world. Bless them that they shall be happy at times and serious at times, that they may enjoy life and drink of its fulness. Bless them that they may walk acceptably before Thee as Thy cherished sons and daughters. Each is Thy child with capacity to do great and noble things. Keep them on the high road that leads to achievement. Save them from the mistakes that could destroy them. If they have erred, forgive their trespasses and lead them back to ways of peace and progress. For these blessings I humbly pray with gratitude for them and invoke Thy blessings upon them with love and affection, in the name of Him who carries the burdens of our sins, even the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. □

Text of a talk given to youth and young single adults on 12 November 2000 at the Conference Center in Salt Lake City and broadcast by satellite throughout the Church.

Gospel topics: gratitude, humility, integrity, moral purity, prayer, work, youth

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

Some Points of Emphasis

You may wish to make these points in your home teaching discussions:

- 1. Of all the challenges faced by every generation, the ones we have today are most easily handled. They largely involve behavioral decisions that, when made, leave the challenge behind us.*
- 2. Be grateful. Express appreciation to everyone who does us a favor or assists us in any way.*
- 3. Be smart. The Lord wants us to train our minds and hands to become an influence for good.*
- 4. Be clean. We live in a world filled with filth and sleaze. We cannot afford to let it touch us. We should not be disrespectful of the body which the Lord has given us.*

5. Be true. Let us be loyal to the Church under all circumstances. The authorities of this Church will lead us in paths of happiness.

6. Be humble. The meek and the humble are those who are teachable.

7. Be prayerful. Look to the Lord for understanding and guidance, and walk according to His precepts and commandments.

Discussion Helps

1. Relate your feelings about the counsel given by the prophet of the Lord.

2. Are there some scriptures, quotations, or stories in this article that the family might read aloud and discuss?

3. Would this discussion be better after a previsit chat with the head of the house? Is there a message from the bishop or quorum leader?



Weightier

All Latter-day Saints understand that having an eternal family is an eternal goal.

Matters

Diversity and choice are not the weightier matters of the law. The weightier matters are love of God, obedience to His commandments, and unity in accomplishing the work of His Church.

BY ELDER DALLIN H. OAKS
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The book of Matthew contains the Savior's denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees: "Ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the *weightier matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matt. 23:23; emphasis added).

I wish to address some "weightier matters" we might overlook if we allow ourselves to focus exclusively on lesser matters. The weightier matters to which I refer are the qualities like faith and the love of God and His work that will move us strongly toward our eternal goals.

In speaking of weightier matters, I seek to contrast our ultimate goals in eternity with the mortal methods or short-term objectives we use to pursue them. The Apostle Paul described the difference between earthly perspectives and eternal ones in these words: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18).

If we concentrate too intently on our obvious earthly methods or objectives, we can lose sight of our eternal goals, which the Apostle called "things . . . not seen." If we do this, we can forget where we should be headed and in eternal terms go nowhere. We do not improve our position in eternity just by flying farther and faster in mortality, but only by moving knowledgeably in the right direction. As the Lord told us in modern revelation, "That which the Spirit testifies unto you . . . ye should do in all holiness of heart, walking uprightly before me, *considering the end of your salvation*" (D&C 46:7; emphasis added).

We must not confuse means and ends. The vehicle is not the destination. If we lose sight of our eternal goals, we might think that the most important thing is how fast we are moving and that any road will get us to our destination. The Apostle Paul described this attitude as "hav[ing] a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2). Zeal is a method, not a goal. Zeal—even a zeal toward God—needs to be "according to knowledge" of God's commandments and His plan for His children. In other words, the weightier matter of the eternal goal must not be displaced by the mortal method, however excellent in itself.

Thus far I have spoken in generalities. Now I will give three examples.

FAMILY

All Latter-day Saints understand that having an eternal family is an eternal goal. Exaltation is a family matter, not possible outside the everlasting covenant of marriage, which makes possible the perpetuation of glorious family relationships. But this does not mean that everything related to mortal families is an eternal goal. There are many short-term objectives associated with families—such as family togetherness or family solidarity or love—that are methods, not the eternal goals we pursue in priority above all others. For example, family solidarity to conduct an evil enterprise is obviously no virtue. Neither is family solidarity to conceal and perpetuate some evil practice like abuse.

The purpose of mortal families is to bring children into the world, to teach them what is right, and to prepare all family members for exaltation in eternal family relationships. The gospel plan contemplates the kind of family government, discipline, solidarity, and love that serve those ultimate goals. But even the love of family members is subject to the overriding first commandment, which is love of God (see Matt. 22:37–38), and the Savior's directive, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). As Jesus taught, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37).

CHOICE, OR AGENCY

My next example in this message on weightier matters is the role of choice, or agency.

Few concepts have more potential to mislead us than the idea that choice, or agency, is an ultimate goal. For Latter-day Saints, this potential confusion is partly a product of the fact that moral agency—the right to choose—is a fundamental condition of mortal life. Without this precious gift of God, the purpose of mortal life could not be realized. To secure our agency in mortality we fought a mighty contest the book of Revelation calls a "war in heaven." This premortal

contest ended with the devil and his angels being cast out of heaven and being denied the opportunity of having a body in mortal life (see Rev. 12:7–9).

But our war to secure agency was won. The test in this postwar mortal estate is not to secure choice but to use it—to choose good instead of evil so that we can achieve our eternal goals. In mortality, choice is a method, not a goal.

Of course, mortals must still resolve many questions concerning what restrictions or consequences should be placed upon choices. But those questions come under the heading of freedom, not agency. Many do not understand that important fact. We are responsible to use our agency in a world of choices. It will not do to pretend that our agency has been taken away when we are not free to exercise it without unwelcome consequences.

Because choice is a method, choices can be exercised either way on any matter, and our choices can serve any goal. Therefore, those who consider freedom of choice as a goal can easily slip into the position of trying to justify any choice that is made. “Choice” can even become a slogan to justify one particular choice. For example, today one who says “I am pro-choice” is clearly understood as opposing any legal restrictions upon a woman’s choice to abort a fetus.

More than 30 years ago, as a young law professor, I published one of the earliest articles on the legal

Exaltation is a family matter, not possible outside the everlasting covenant of marriage. . . . But this does not mean that everything related to mortal families is an eternal goal.



consequences of abortion. Since that time I have been a knowledgeable observer of the national debate and the unfortunate Supreme Court decisions on the so-called “right to abortion.” I have been fascinated with how cleverly those who sought and now defend legalized abortion on demand have moved the issue away from a debate on the moral, ethical, and medical pros and cons of legal restrictions on abortion and focused the debate on the slogan or issue of choice. The slogan or sound bite “pro-choice” has had an almost magical effect in justifying abortion and in neutralizing opposition to it.

Pro-choice slogans have been particularly seductive to Latter-day Saints because we know that moral agency, which can be described as the power of choice, is a fundamental necessity in the gospel plan. All Latter-day Saints are pro-choice according to that theological definition. But being pro-choice on the need for moral agency does not end the matter for us. Choice is a method, not the ultimate goal. We are accountable for our choices, and only righteous choices will move us toward our eternal goals.

In this effort, Latter-day Saints follow the teachings of the prophets. On this subject our prophetic guidance is clear. The Lord commanded, “Thou shalt not . . . kill, nor do anything like unto it” (D&C 59:6). The Church opposes elective abortion for personal or social convenience. Our members are taught that, subject only to some very rare exceptions, they must not submit to, perform, encourage, pay for, or arrange for an abortion. That direction tells us what we need to do on the weightier matters of the law, the choices that will move us toward eternal life.

In today’s world we are not true to our teachings if we are merely pro-choice. We must stand up for the *right* choice. Those who persist in refusing to think beyond slogans and sound bites like pro-choice wander from the goals they pretend to espouse and wind up giving their support to results they might not support if those results were presented without disguise.

For example, consider the uses some have made of the possible exceptions to our firm teachings against abortion. Our leaders have taught that the only possible exceptions are when the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest, or when a competent physician has determined that the life or health of the mother is in serious jeopardy or that the fetus has severe defects that will not allow the baby to survive beyond birth. But even these exceptions do not justify abortion automatically. Because abortion is a most serious matter, we are counseled that it should be considered only after the persons responsible have consulted with their bishops and received divine confirmation through prayer.

Some Latter-day Saints say they deplore abortion, but they give these

exceptional circumstances as a basis for their pro-choice position that the law should allow abortion on demand in all circumstances. Such persons should face the reality that the circumstances described in these three exceptions are extremely rare. For example, conception by incest or rape—the circumstance most commonly cited by those who use exceptions to argue for abortion on demand—is involved in only a tiny minority of abortions. More than 95 percent of the millions of abortions performed each year extinguish the life of a fetus conceived by consensual relations. Thus the effect in over 95 percent of abortions is not to vindicate choice but to avoid its consequences.¹ Using arguments of “choice” to try to justify altering the consequences of choice is a classic case of omitting what the Savior called “the weightier matters of the law.”

A prominent basis for the secular or philosophical arguments for abortion on demand is the argument that a woman should have control over her own body. Not long ago I received a letter from a thoughtful Latter-day Saint outside the United States who analyzed that argument in secular terms. Since his analysis reaches the same conclusion I have urged on religious grounds, I quote it here for the benefit of those most subject to persuasion on this basis:

“Every woman has, within the limits of nature, the right to choose what will or will not happen to her body. Every woman has, at the same time, the responsibility for the way she uses her body. If by her choice she behaves in such a way that a human fetus is conceived, she has not only the right *to* but also the responsibility *for* that fetus. If it is an unwanted pregnancy, she is not justified in ending it with the claim that it interferes with her right to choose. She herself chose what would happen to her body by risking pregnancy. She had her choice. If she has no better reason, her conscience should tell her that abortion would be a highly irresponsible choice.

“What constitutes a good reason? Since a human fetus has intrinsic and infinite human value, the only good reason for an abortion would be the violation or deprivation of or the threat to the woman’s right to choose what will or will not happen to her body. Social, educational, financial, and personal considerations alone do not outweigh the value of the life that is in the fetus. These considerations by themselves may properly lead to the decision to place the baby for adoption after its birth, but not to end its existence in utero.

“The woman’s right to choose what will or will not happen to her body is obviously violated by rape or incest. When conception results in such a case, the

There are many short-term objectives associated with families—such as family togetherness or family solidarity or love—that are methods, not the eternal goals we pursue in priority above all others.

woman has the moral as well as the legal right to an abortion because the condition of pregnancy is the result of someone else’s irresponsibility, not hers. She does not have to take responsibility for it. To force her by law to carry the fetus to term would be a further violation of her right. She also has the right to refuse an abortion. This would give her the right to the fetus and also the responsibility for it. She could later relinquish this right and this responsibility through the process of placing the baby for adoption after it is born. Whichever way is a responsible choice.”

The man who wrote those words also applied the same reasoning to the other exceptions allowed by our doctrine—life of the mother and a baby that will not survive birth.



I conclude this discussion of choice with two more short points.

If we say we are anti-abortion in our personal life but pro-choice in public policy, we are saying that we will not use our influence to establish public policies that encourage righteous choices on matters God’s servants have defined as serious sins. I urge Latter-day Saints who have taken that position to ask themselves which other

grievous sins should be decriminalized or smiled on by the law due to this theory that persons should not be hampered in their choices. Should we decriminalize or lighten the legal consequences of child abuse? of cruelty to animals? of pollution? of fraud? of fathers who choose to abandon their families for greater freedom or convenience?

Similarly, some reach the pro-choice position by saying we should not legislate morality. Those who take this position should realize that the law of crimes legislates nothing but morality. Should we repeal all laws with a moral basis so that our government will not punish any choices some persons consider immoral? Such an action would wipe out virtually all of the laws against crimes.

DIVERSITY

My last illustration of the bad effects of confusing means and ends, methods and goals, concerns the word *diversity*. Not many labels have been productive of more confused thinking in our time than this one. A respected federal judge recently commented on current changes in culture and values by observing that “a new credo in celebration of diversity seems to be emerging which proclaims, ‘Divided We Stand!’”² Even in religious terms, we sometimes hear the words “celebrate diversity” as if diversity were an ultimate goal.

The word *diversity* has legitimate uses to describe a *condition*, such as when one discusses “racial and cultural diversity.” Similarly, what we now call “diversity” appears in the scriptures as a condition. This is evident wherever differences among the children of God are described, such as in the numerous scriptural references to nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples.

Yet in the scriptures, the objectives we are taught to pursue on the way to our eternal goals are ideals like love and obedience. These ideals do not accept us as we are but require each of us to make changes. Jesus did not pray that His followers would be “diverse.” He prayed that they would be “one” (John 17:21–22). Modern revelation does not say, “Be diverse; and if ye are not diverse, ye are not mine.”

It says, “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27).

Since diversity is a condition, a method, or a short-term objective—not an ultimate goal—whenever diversity is urged it is appropriate to ask, “What kind of diversity?” or “Diversity in what circumstance or condition?” or “Diversity in furtherance of what goal?” This is especially important in our policy debates, which should be conducted not in terms of slogans but in terms of the goals we seek and the methods or shorter-term objectives that will achieve them. Diversity for its own sake is meaningless and can clearly be shown to lead to unacceptable results. For example, if diversity is the underlying goal for a neighborhood, does this mean we should seek to assure that the neighborhood includes thieves and pedophiles, slaughterhouses and water hazards? Diversity can be a good method to achieve some long-term goal, but public policy discussions need to get beyond the slogan to identify the goal, to specify the proposed diversity, and to explain how this kind of diversity will help to achieve the agreed-upon goal.

Our Church has an approach to the obvious cultural and ethnic diversities among our members. We teach that what unites us is far more important than what differentiates us. Consequently, our members are asked to concentrate their efforts to strengthen our unity—not to glorify our diversity. For example, our objective is not to organize local wards and branches according to differences in culture or in ethnic or national origins, although that effect is sometimes produced on a temporary basis when required because of language barriers. Instead, we teach that members of majority groupings (whatever their nature) are responsible to accept Church members of other groupings, providing full fellowship and full opportunities in Church participation. We seek to establish a community of Saints—“one body,” the

Our prophetic guidance is clear. The Lord commanded, “Thou shalt not . . . kill, nor do anything like unto it.” The Church opposes elective abortion for personal or social convenience.

Apostle Paul called it (1 Cor. 12:13)—where everyone feels needed and wanted and where all can pursue the eternal goals we share.

Consistent with the Savior’s command to “be one,” we seek unity. On this subject President Gordon B. Hinckley has taught:

“I remember when President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., as a counselor in the First Presidency, would stand at this pulpit and plead for unity among the priesthood. I think he was not asking that we give up our individual personalities and become as robots cast from a single mold. I am confident he was not asking that we cease to think, to meditate, to ponder as individuals. I think he was telling us that if we are to assist in moving forward the work of God, we must carry in our hearts a

united conviction concerning the great basic foundation stones of our faith. . . . If we are to assist in moving forward the work of God, we must carry in our hearts a united conviction that the ordinances and covenants of this work are eternal and everlasting in their consequences.”³

Anyone who preaches unity risks misunderstanding. The same is true of anyone who questions the

goal of diversity. Such a one risks being thought intolerant. But tolerance is not jeopardized by promoting unity or by challenging diversity. Again, I quote President Hinckley: “Each of us is an individual. Each of us is different. There must be respect for those differences.”⁴

On another occasion he said:

“We must work harder to build mutual respect, an attitude of forbearance, with tolerance one for another regardless of the doctrines and philosophies which we may espouse. Concerning these you and I may disagree. But we can do so with respect and civility.”⁵

President Hinckley continues:

“An article of the faith to which I subscribe states: ‘We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may’ (A of F 1:11). I hope to find myself always on the side of those defending this position. Our strength lies in our freedom to choose. There is strength even in our very diversity. But there is greater strength in the God-given mandate to each of us to work for the uplift and blessing of all His sons and daughters, regardless of their ethnic or national origin or other differences.”⁶

In short, we preach unity among the community of Saints and tolerance toward the personal differences that are inevitable in the beliefs and conduct of a



diverse population. Tolerance obviously requires a non-contentious manner of relating toward one another's differences. But tolerance does not require abandoning one's standards or one's opinions on political or public policy choices. Tolerance is a way of reacting to diversity, not a command to insulate it from examination.

Strong calls for diversity in the public sector sometimes have the effect of pressuring those holding majority opinions to abandon fundamental values to accommodate the diverse positions of those in the minority. Usually this does not substitute a minority value for a majority one. Rather, it seeks to achieve "diversity" by abandoning the official value position altogether, so that no one's value will be contradicted by an official or semiofficial position. The result of this abandonment is not a diversity of values but an official anarchy of values. I believe this is an example of former Brigham Young University visiting professor Louis Pojman's observation that diversity can be used as "a euphemism for moral relativism."⁷

There are hundreds of examples of this, where achieving the goal of diversity results in the anarchy of values we call moral relativism. These examples include such varied proposals as forbidding the public schools to teach the wrongfulness of certain behavior or the rightness of patriotism. Another example is the attempt to banish a representation of the Ten Commandments from any public buildings.

In a day when prominent thinkers have decried the fact that universities have stopped teaching right and wrong, we are grateful for the countercultural position at Brigham Young University. Moral relativism, which is said to be the dominant force in American universities, has no legitimate place at BYU. The faculty teach values—the right and wrong taught in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, diversity and choice are not the weightier matters of the law. The weightier matters that move us toward our goal of eternal life are love of God, obedience to His commandments, and unity in accomplishing the work of His Church. In this belief and practice we move against the powerful modern tides running toward individualism and tolerance rather than toward obedience and cooperative action. Though our belief and practice is unpopular, it is right, and it does not require the blind obedience or the stifling uniformity its critics charge. If we are united on our eternal goal and united on the inspired principles that will get us there, we can be diverse on individual efforts in support of our goals and consistent with those principles.

We know that the work of God

cannot be done without unity and cooperative action. We also know that the children of God cannot be exalted as single individuals. Neither a man nor a woman can be exalted in the celestial kingdom unless both unite in the unselfishness of the everlasting covenant of marriage and unless both choose to keep the commandments and honor the covenants of that united state.

I testify of Jesus Christ, our Savior. As the One whose Atonement paid the incomprehensible price for our sins, He is the One who can prescribe the conditions for our salvation. He has commanded us to keep His commandments (see John 14:15) and to "be one" (D&C 38:27). I pray that we will make the wise choices to keep the commandments and to seek the unity that will move us toward our ultimate goal, "eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7). □

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on 9 February 1999.

Gospel topics: abortion, agency, choice, diversity, eternal perspective, family, goals, mortality, tolerance, unity

NOTES

1. See Russell M. Nelson, "Reverence for Life," *Ensign*, May 1985, 11–14.
2. J. Thomas Greene, "Activist Judicial Philosophies on Trial," *Federal Rules Decisions* 178 (1997): 200.
3. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 672.
4. *Teachings*, 661.
5. *Teachings*, 665.
6. *Teachings*, 664.
7. "Viewpoint," *Daily Universe*, 13 Oct. 1998, 4.

We teach that what unites us is far more important than what differentiates us. Consequently, our members are asked to concentrate their efforts to strengthen our unity—not to glorify our diversity.



INSEPARABLE WITNESSES OF JESUS CHRIST



The Doctrine and Covenants testifies of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, and both majestically witness of the Savior.

BY ELDER JOHN M. MADSEN
Of the Seventy

The Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Mormon are inseparable, powerful witnesses of the divinity of Jesus Christ and His great latter-day work. These two volumes of scripture fulfill, at least in part, a promise of the Lord to Enoch: “And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth” (Moses 7:62). After quoting this scripture in a conference talk, President Ezra Taft Benson said that “the Book of Mormon has come forth out of the earth, filled with truth” and that the Doctrine and Covenants is filled with “revelation after revelation from the heavens” (“The Gift of Modern Revelation,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 79–80).

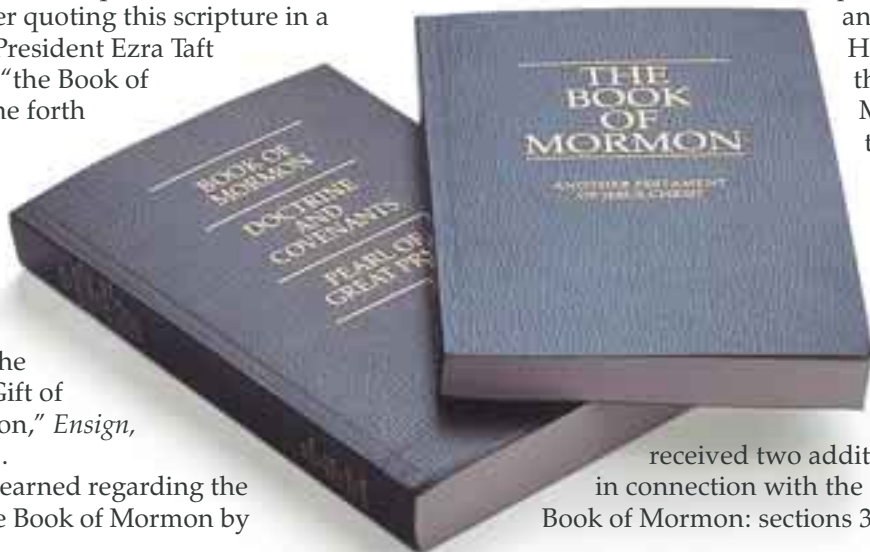
Much can be learned regarding the importance of the Book of Mormon by

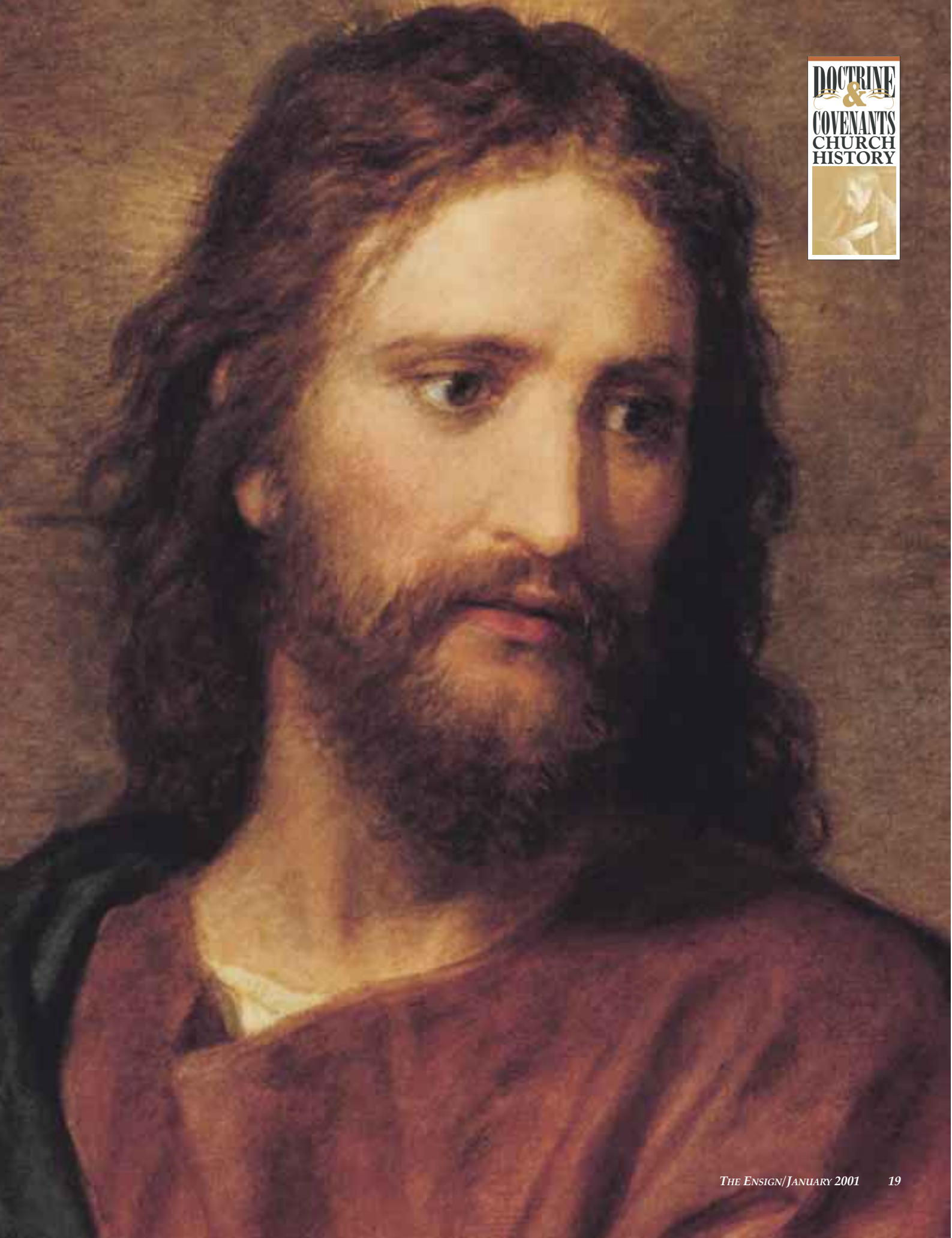
reading the revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants.

TIES BETWEEN THE BOOK OF MORMON AND DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

While delivering his glorious message of a book “written upon gold plates,” the angel Moroni said that “the fulness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it” (JS—H 1:34). After outlining the means by which the book was to be translated, Moroni began quoting prophecies of the Old and New Testaments. He first quoted from the third chapter of Malachi, and then the fourth chapter. Doctrine and Covenants section 2 contains a brief account of this visitation.

Then in the summer of 1828 the Prophet Joseph Smith received two additional revelations in connection with the translation of the Book of Mormon: sections 3 and 10 have to do





with the 116 pages of manuscript entrusted to Martin Harris that he might “carry the writings home and show them” (*History of the Church*, 1:21).

In February 1829 Joseph Smith Sr. came to visit his son. He was fully aware of all that had transpired: the vision of the Father and the Son to young Joseph, the promise spoken by the Lord that “the fullness of the Gospel should at some future time be made known” (*History of the Church*, 4:536), the appearances of the angel Moroni, the receipt of the gold plates, the work of translation, the loss of 116 pages of manuscript, and the taking away and return of the plates and the Urim and Thummim. On this occasion, the Prophet Joseph inquired of the Lord in behalf of his father and received section 4, which begins, “Now behold, a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men.” The translation of the Book of Mormon was part of and essential to the accomplishment of the Lord’s marvelous latter-day work.

In March 1829 Martin Harris was deeply repentant and sorrowful over losing the 116 pages of translation, and he again journeyed to Harmony, Pennsylvania. He pleaded with Joseph to inquire of the Lord in his behalf. Once again the Prophet received another revelation, section 5, wherein Martin Harris was called to witness of the gold plates if he would repent and humble himself before the Lord.

In April 1829 Oliver Cowdery, hearing that Joseph had received the plates, journeyed to Harmony, Pennsylvania, and immediately became involved in the work of translation, assisting Joseph as a scribe (see *History of the Church*, 1:32–33). During this month, sections 6, 8, and 9 were given as questions arose from the translation of the Book of Mormon.

Section 13 is another wonderful example of revelation to the Prophet in answer to questions encountered while translating the Book of Mormon. Said Joseph: “We still continued the work of translation, when, in the ensuing month (May, 1829), we on a certain day went into the woods to pray and inquire of the Lord respecting baptism for the remission of sins, *that we found mentioned in the translation of the plates*. While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying:

“Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins” (JS—H 1:68–69; emphasis added in v. 68; see also D&C 13).

This heavenly messenger, who identified himself as “John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament,” further explained to Joseph and Oliver “that he acted under the direction of Peter, James and John who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek, which Priesthood he said would in due time be conferred on us” (*History of the Church*, 1:40). Thus the coming forth of the Book of Mormon not only resulted in numerous revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants,

but also was the catalyst for the restoration of the holy Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods, preparatory to the reestablishment of the Church and kingdom of God in these latter days.

Sections 14–20 all further illustrate the relationship between the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants.

TEACHINGS ABOUT THE BOOK OF MORMON’S IMPORTANCE

A little over a year and a half after the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon and the organization of the Church, the Lord revealed His “preface” to the Doctrine and Covenants, as contained in section 1. In this revealed preface, the Lord testified that the Prophet Joseph Smith was given power to translate the Book

of Mormon “through the mercy of God, by the power of God” (D&C 1:29).

In section 3, the Lord stated some of His purposes for bringing forth the Book of Mormon:

“Inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, *even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people—*

“And to the Nephites, . . . *through the testimony of their fathers—*

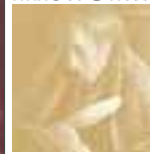
“And this testimony shall come to the knowledge of the Lamanites. . . .

“*And for this very purpose are these plates preserved, which contain these records—that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to his people;*

“*And that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and that they might know the promises of*



The coming forth of the Book of Mormon was a catalyst for the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood.



the Lord, and that they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and be glorified through faith in his name, and that through their repentance they might be saved” (D&C 3:16–20; emphasis added).

In section 5 the Lord has much to say about the Book of Mormon’s importance in the Restoration of the gospel. The Lord reminded Joseph that “you have a gift to translate the plates; and this is the first gift that I bestowed upon you; and I have commanded that you should pretend to no other gift until my purpose is fulfilled in this; for I will grant unto you no other gift until it [the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon] is finished” (D&C 5:4; emphasis added). The Lord made it clear to His servant Joseph Smith that the Book of Mormon had to be translated and made available before His great latter-day work proceeded.

Also in section 5, verses 5–16, the Lord explained why the Book of Mormon is so important in the

The Prophet Joseph Smith received many instructions about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon that are found in the Doctrine and Covenants.

establishment of His kingdom on the earth. In these verses, the Lord repeatedly used the phrase *my words* to refer to the Book of Mormon, which was soon to come forth, “through” the Prophet Joseph Smith (see also 3 Ne. 21:9–11). The Lord declared that if the children of men “will not believe *my words* [contained in the Book of Mormon], *they would not believe you, my servant Joseph*” (D&C 5:7; emphasis added).

These few verses of scripture illustrate the great truth declared by the Prophet Joseph that “the Book of Mormon [is] . . . the keystone of our religion” (*History of the Church*, 4:461). A witness of the divinity and truthfulness of the Book of Mormon confirms that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith is a true prophet, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of



Several sections of the Doctrine and Covenants were received while Oliver Cowdery worked as scribe to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the translation of the Book of Mormon.

Latter-day Saints, as organized by the Prophet Joseph, is true. With such a witness of the Spirit, courageous souls from all the nations of the earth are embracing the restored gospel (see D&C 5:16).

In Doctrine and Covenants 6:9, the Lord instructed Oliver Cowdery to “assist to bring forth my work.” Oliver Cowdery was indeed instrumental in bringing forth the Book of Mormon, which contained the “fulness of the gospel” (see D&C 20:8–9; 27:5; 42:12; 135:3). The Lord would send forth His servants with this record in their hands to “work a marvelous work among the children of men, unto the convincing of many of their sins, that they may come unto repentance, and that they may come unto the kingdom of my Father” (D&C 18:44).

Section 17 of the Doctrine and Covenants contains one of the most clear and powerful of all recorded testimonies of the Book of Mormon. The Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the Book of Mormon is “Another Testament,” declares that “my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., . . . has translated the book [of Mormon], even that part which I have commanded him, and as your Lord and your God liveth it is true” (D&C 17:5–6).

Who can read or hear this testimony and ever wonder how the Lord regards the Book of Mormon? It is a serious thing to hear or to read and ponder these words, for they are sufficient to condemn us if we should ever reject the Book of Mormon or be unfaithful to the cause of Christ and His kingdom (see D&C 5:15, 18).

In June 1829 the Lord declared to Oliver Cowdery, the Prophet’s scribe, this powerful testimony to the truthfulness and importance of the Book of Mormon: “Behold, I have manifested unto you, by my Spirit in



many instances, that *the things which you have written are true*. . . .

“And . . . I give unto you a commandment, that you rely upon the things which are written;

“For in them are all things written concerning *the foundation of my church, my gospel, and my rock*.

“Wherefore, if you shall build up my church, upon the foundation of my gospel and my rock, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you” (D&C 18:2–5; emphasis added). Thus, the Book of Mormon contains the fundamental teachings of the restored Church of Jesus Christ, as the Lord Himself testified.

Section 20 contains extensive discussion of the Book of Mormon. It is significant that the revelation to formally organize the Church was not given until the Book of Mormon was translated and published.

After confirming that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were duly called of God and authorized to organize and give leadership to His Church, the Lord declared the following:

“[God] gave him [the Prophet Joseph Smith] power from on high, by the means which were before prepared, to translate the Book of Mormon;

“Which contains a record of a fallen people, and the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also;

“Which was given by inspiration, and is confirmed to others by the ministering of angels, and is declared unto the world by them [the Three Witnesses]—

“Proving to the world that the holy scriptures are true, and that God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old;

“Thereby showing that he is the same God yesterday, today, and forever. . . .

“Therefore, having so great witnesses [Joseph Smith, the Three Witnesses, the Eight Witnesses, and even those who compiled the Book of Mormon], by them shall the world be judged, even as many as shall hereafter come to a knowledge of this work [the Book of Mormon].

“And those who receive it in faith, and work righteousness, shall receive a crown of eternal life” (D&C 20:8–14).

In section 84 the Lord made another significant reference and gave a sobering warning with regard to the Book of Mormon. To the Saints in 1832 the Lord said:

“And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received—

“Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation.

“And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all.

“And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and *remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written*” (D&C 84:54–57; emphasis added).

On several occasions President Ezra Taft Benson challenged members of the Church to study, use, and abide by the precepts of the Book of Mormon to free themselves from that same condemnation pronounced upon the early Latter-day Saints (see *A Witness and a Warning* [1988], 6–8).

CONCLUSION

Truly the Lord has much to say about the Book of Mormon in the Doctrine and Covenants. These two volumes of scripture are indeed inseparable and powerful witnesses of the divinity of Christ and of His great latter-day work. President Benson explained the important relationship of these two sacred books:

“Excluding the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants is by far the greatest external witness and evidence which we have from the Lord that the Book of Mormon is true. . . .

“The Doctrine and Covenants is the binding link between the Book of Mormon and the continuing work of the Restoration through the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors. . . .

“The Book of Mormon brings men to Christ. The Doctrine and Covenants brings men to Christ’s kingdom. . . .

“The Book of Mormon is the ‘keystone’ of our religion, and the Doctrine and Covenants is the capstone, with continuing latter-day revelation. The Lord has placed His stamp of approval on both the keystone and the capstone” (“The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 83). □

Gospel topics: Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, testimony



President Ezra Taft Benson has said, “The Book of Mormon brings men to Christ. The Doctrine and Covenants brings men to Christ’s kingdom.”

A LATTER-DAY TESTAMENT OF BIBLICAL TRUTH



The Doctrine and Covenants testifies of biblical prophets, their doctrinal teachings, historical events, and fulfillment of ancient prophecy.

BY REX C. REEVE JR.

When the Bible was first written, it contained the plain and precious truths of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nephi saw that many of these plain and precious truths, as well as the covenants of the Lord, were taken from the Bible (see 1 Ne. 13:24–29). In this dispensation the Prophet Joseph Smith declared, “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly” (A of F 1:8). He later wrote, “From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled.”¹

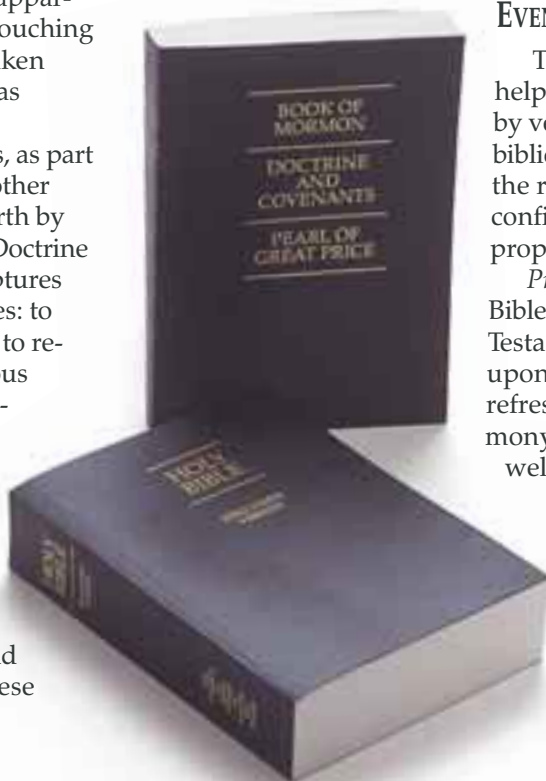
Nephi saw that in the last days, as part of the Lord’s plan of restoration, other books of scripture would come forth by the power of God, including the Doctrine and Covenants.² These other scriptures would have four primary purposes: to corroborate the truth of the Bible, to restore some of the plain and precious truths taken from the Bible, to witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Eternal Father, and to testify that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ (see 1 Ne. 13:39–40). In 1835, 12 men called to be Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ appended their testimony to the Doctrine and Covenants and declared “that these

commandments were given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for all men and are verily true.” The Doctrine and Covenants corroborates the truth of the Bible and is “in fulfillment of and in concert with the words of all the holy prophets since the world began.”³ The following are just a few of the doctrinal truths confirmed by latter-day revelation.

VERIFYING BIBLICAL PROPHETS, EVENTS, AND PROPHECIES

The Doctrine and Covenants helps establish the truth of the Bible by verifying the actual existence of biblical prophets, by testifying of the reality of biblical events, and by confirming the fulfillment of biblical prophecies.

Prophets. In a time when many Bible prophets (especially Old Testament prophets) are looked upon as mythical characters, it is refreshing to have a renewed testimony of their actual existence as well as to receive additional information regarding their ministries. The Doctrine and Covenants confirms that Adam was the first man on the earth and the first to receive the priesthood (see D&C 84:16–17). He obtained



The priesthood ordination of 69-year-old Seth by Adam is but one of many biblical events described by revelation through the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 107:42).

The Doctrine and Covenants describes many biblical prophets, including Enoch, and verifies biblical events, such as the Lord's taking of Enoch and his city, Zion, into heaven.



the first presidency⁴ and continues to hold a position of great importance through his possession of the keys of salvation under the counsel and direction of Jesus Christ (see D&C 78:16).

The Prophet Joseph Smith referenced “the voice of Michael, the archangel,” as having instructed him (D&C 128:21). At a future time Adam will return again and preside at the great council at Adam-ondi-Ahman (see D&C 116). Adam will sound the trump at the Second Coming and say, “It is finished! The Lamb of God hath overcome” (D&C 88:106). He will lead the righteous forces in the final battle against Satan and his followers at the end of the Millennium (see D&C 88:106–16). Finally, Adam will administer to his righteous posterity in the patriarchal order through all eternity.⁵

The Prophet Joseph Smith identified Noah as the angel Gabriel and taught that he (Noah) stands next to Adam in authority in the priesthood.⁶ The Doctrine and Covenants teaches that Noah was among the mighty ones in the world of spirits (see D&C 138:41). He was ordained to the patriarchal priesthood when he was 10 years old (see D&C 107:52). According to the Old Testament, Noah found favor with the Lord and was commanded to build an ark to preserve human and animal life during the Flood (see Gen. 5–9). Noah was among those redeemed by the Lord at His Resurrection (see D&C 133:54). As a resurrected being, Noah also instructed the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 128:21).

Because Melchizedek, a great Bible prophet, is almost unknown to the world, many people are confused about his true identity (see Gen. 14:18–24; Heb. 5:6). The Bible record gives the false impression that Melchizedek was without father or mother or descent, with neither beginning of days nor end of life (see Heb. 7:3).

We can look to Joseph Smith and the Doctrine and Covenants for revelations concerning Melchizedek, one of God’s ancient high priests of whom “none were greater” (see Alma 13:10, 19). Melchizedek conferred the priesthood upon Abraham and received his tithing (see D&C 84:14; Alma 13:15). Melchizedek was honored by having his name used to identify the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God, thus enabling men to avoid the too frequent repetition of the name of Deity (see D&C 107:2–4). In the eyes of his people Melchizedek stood as a prototype of the Son of God: both bore the title “Prince of Peace,” and both were joint heirs of the Father’s kingdom.⁷ We also learn that it was the priesthood, not Melchizedek, that was “without beginning of days or end of years” (D&C 84:17; see also JST, Gen. 14:28; Heb. 7:3, Bible appendix).

The many other examples of biblical prophets described in the Doctrine and Covenants are too numerous to detail. For example, we learn more about Adam’s son Seth (see D&C 107:42–43, 53), Enoch and his city (see D&C 45:11–14; 107:49), Moses and the priesthood (see D&C 84:25–26; 110:11), Elijah and the



sealing keys (see D&C 110:13–16), and the appearances of John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John (see D&C 13:1; 27:12). Finally we read that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have “entered into their exaltation, . . . and sit upon thrones, and are not angels but are gods” (D&C 132:37).

Events. The Doctrine and Covenants testifies of the reality of sacred events recorded in the Bible, such as the Creation of the universe and the Fall of Adam and Eve. It reaffirms that God “created man, male and female, after his own image and in his own likeness” (D&C 20:18) and placed them in the Garden of Eden with specific laws and commandments (see Moses 3:8). Adam and Eve yielded to the temptation of Satan and transgressed the commandment of God, which caused them to be cast out of the Garden of Eden (see D&C 29:35–50). Thus all mankind are born into a fallen world and by transgressing the laws of God become sensual, devilish, and fallen (see D&C 20:20). The Doctrine and Covenants confirms that Adam and Eve were taught the gospel of Jesus Christ by angels (see D&C 29:42).

Other biblical events verified by the Doctrine and Covenants include the Savior’s Creation of the earth (see D&C 14:9), the Lord’s taking of Enoch and Zion (see D&C 38:4; 45:11–14), the Flood (see D&C 138:41), the division of land after the Flood (see D&C 133:24), the parting of the Red Sea (see D&C 8:3), the loss of the Melchizedek Priesthood (see D&C 84:23–27), the sounding of a trump on Mount Sinai (see D&C 29:13), and Christ’s suffering in Gethsemane (see D&C 19:15–19).

Prophecies. The Doctrine and Covenants testifies of the literal scattering and gathering of Israel. It was prophesied that the house of Israel would be scattered among all nations (see D&C 45:19). Today the scattered remnants are exhorted to return to the Lord (see D&C 113:10). On 3 April 1836 in the Kirtland Temple, Moses appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and committed unto them the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth (see D&C 110:11). Additionally, we read of the long-promised coming of Elijah, who was to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers (see D&C 2; 110:13–16).

Early Church missionaries were instructed that they were called to bring to pass the gathering of the Lord’s elect (see D&C 29:7) and that they were sent forth to recover the Lord’s people, the house of Israel (see D&C 39:11). Since Moses and Elijah returned to restore priesthood keys, the words of Bible prophets concerning these events have begun to be fulfilled.



The Doctrine and Covenants testifies of the reality of sacred events recorded in the Bible, such as the Flood in the days of Noah.

The Doctrine and Covenants sheds light on two prophecies about the coming forth of the Church in the latter days. Section 65 confirms Daniel’s prophecy that the Lord’s kingdom would roll forth in the last days (see Dan 2:45). Section 86 shows that the parable of the wheat and the tares has reference to our day: Satan sows the tares, and “the tares choke the wheat and drive the church into the wilderness” (D&C 86:3).

Today many people question or misunderstand the Second Coming of Christ. Bible prophets clearly taught that Jesus Christ would stand at the latter day upon the earth (see Job 19:25) and that He would build up Zion and appear in His glory (see Ps. 102:16). To His disciples in the meridian of time, Jesus indicated the conditions that would exist prior to His Second Coming (see Matt. 24; see also JS—M 1). Both section 45 and Joseph Smith—Matthew add significantly to our understanding of the Second Coming.

Other sections testify of the reality of the Second

Coming. Modern Saints are instructed, “Prepare ye, . . . for the Lord is nigh” (D&C 1:12), and “The day soon cometh that ye shall see me, and know that I am” (D&C 38:8). We learn that “the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near” (D&C 110:16) and that “the Lord . . . shall stand in the midst of his people, and shall reign” (D&C 133:25).

In summary, the Doctrine and Covenants testifies, “The hour is nigh, and that which was spoken by mine apostles must be fulfilled; for as they spoke so shall it come to pass; for I will reveal myself from

heaven with power and great glory, with all the hosts thereof, and dwell in righteousness with men on earth a thousand years, and the wicked shall not stand” (D&C 29:10–11).

RESTORING PLAIN AND PRECIOUS THINGS

The Doctrine and Covenants restores many plain and precious truths by expanding or interpreting Bible passages. A few representative examples follow:

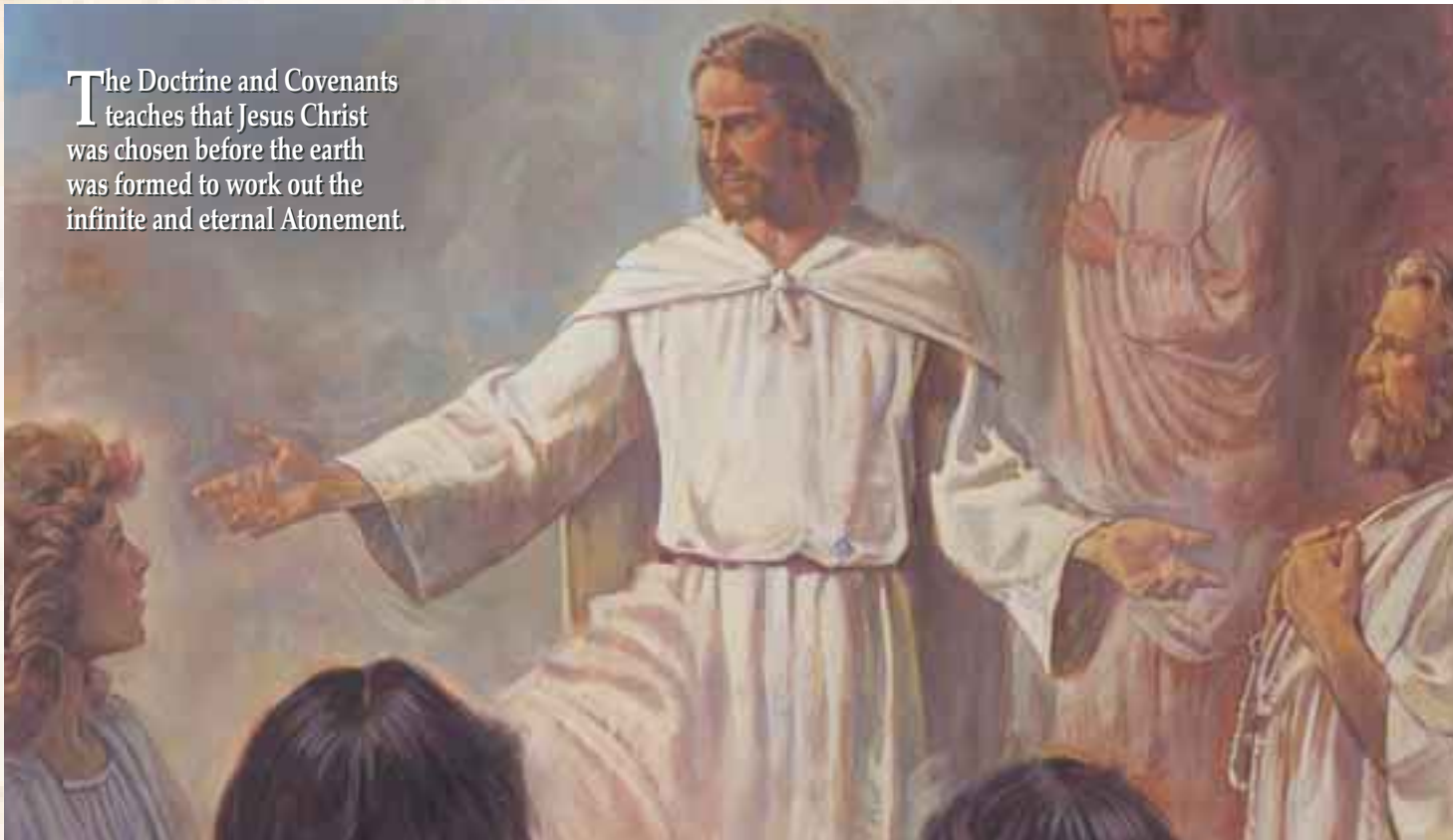
1. “But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:28).

The Doctrine and Covenants adds that those who do this “shall not have the Spirit, but shall deny the faith and shall fear” (D&C 63:16).

2. “For many be called, but few chosen” (Matt. 20:16).

In the Doctrine and Covenants we learn that they are not chosen “because their hearts are set so much

The Doctrine and Covenants teaches that Jesus Christ was chosen before the earth was formed to work out the infinite and eternal Atonement.



upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men” and “do not learn . . . that the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven” and can be controlled “only upon the principles of righteousness” (see D&C 121:34–40).

3. “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them” (Matt. 25:1–3).

The Doctrine and Covenants teaches that the wise virgins are those who “have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived” (D&C 45:57). Those who lack oil shall be cast into the fire and not abide the day of His coming (see D&C 45:56–57).

4. “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23).

The Doctrine and Covenants testifies that the Father and the Son are separate individuals with glorified bodies of flesh and bone (see D&C 130:22) and that this promised visit of the Father and the Son is an actual personal appearance (see D&C 130:3).

In the course of translating the New Testament, Joseph Smith received many revelations that clearly expand understanding of our present Bible, some of which are included in the Doctrine and Covenants,

such as sections 77, 84, 86, and 88. For example, in 1832 while Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were working on the translation of the Bible, they said that the Lord touched the eyes of their understanding and the glory of the Lord shone round about (see D&C 76:15–19). This vision was recorded and is now section 76, the great revelation on the three degrees of glory.

These few examples, plus many others which could be given, stand as a testimony that the Doctrine and Covenants does restore many plain and precious truths lost from the Bible.

TESTIFYING THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD

The Doctrine and Covenants clearly testifies concerning the true nature and reality of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. It provides the foundation of truth essential for building faith which leads to eternal life. Joseph Smith saw God the Father and Jesus Christ as two separate personages “whose brightness and glory defy all description” (JS—H 1:17). He later wrote that God the Father “has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also” (D&C 130:22).

We learn with clarity that Jesus Christ is the Firstborn of the spirit children of the Father (see D&C 93:21–23). He was chosen before the earth was formed to work out the infinite and eternal Atonement. He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth (see D&C 76:24; 93:9–10). He is the Only Begotten Son of God in



the flesh (see D&C 93:11). He redeemed all mankind, making possible immortality and eternal life (see Moses 1:39).

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery saw Jesus Christ in the Kirtland Temple and testified of His reality: “The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened. We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber. His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying: I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 110:1–4).

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon testified: “And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—that by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God” (D&C 76:22–24).



TESTIFYING THAT SALVATION IS ONLY THROUGH CHRIST

Jesus Christ told Moses, “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Immortality refers to the permanent reuniting of the body and the spirit in the Resurrection. The Apostle Paul taught, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22). Jacob said, “There must needs be a power of resurrection, and the resurrection must needs come unto man by reason of the fall” (2 Ne. 9:6). The Doctrine and Covenants testifies that the Atonement of Christ broke the bands of death and that through the triumph and glory of the Lamb all mankind shall be brought forth by the Resurrection (see D&C 76:39).

The Doctrine and Covenants also testifies that eternal life, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God (see D&C 14:7), comes through the Atonement of Jesus Christ coupled with gospel ordinances and personal obedience to gospel teachings. The gospel is that Jesus “came into the world . . . to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness; that through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power” (D&C 76:40–42).

The Savior said: “He that receiveth my gospel receiveth me; and he that receiveth not my gospel receiveth not me. And this is my gospel—repentance and baptism by water, and then cometh the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost” (D&C 39:5–6; see also 33:12). This gospel is the rock upon which Christ will build His Church. The gates of hell shall not prevail against those who continue in this gospel (see D&C 33:11–13). Eternal life consists of gaining an inheritance in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, which assures a continuation of the family in eternity (see D&C 131:1–4).

In these latter days, the Doctrine and Covenants stands with the Book of Mormon and the Pearl of Great Price as one in support of the Bible (see Ezek. 37:15–17). Modern revelation affirms that the saving truths, ordinances, and covenants of the gospel of Jesus Christ are the same now as they were anciently. The Doctrine and Covenants in particular corroborates the truth of the Bible, restores

some of the missing plain and precious things, testifies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and witnesses that salvation is in Jesus Christ. It allows us to see more clearly how the Bible stands in fulfillment of and in concert with the words of all the holy prophets since the world began. □

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Gospel topics: Bible, Doctrine and Covenants, Jesus Christ, prophets, revelation

NOTES

1. *History of the Church*, 1:245.
2. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Man, His Origin and Destiny* (1954), 411–12.
3. Explanatory introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants.
4. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 157.
5. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 1:99–100.
6. *Teachings*, 157.
7. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 474–75.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

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

1. What does the Doctrine and Covenants add to our knowledge of such prophets as Adam, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?
2. What plain and precious things does the Doctrine and Covenants restore to biblical truths?



A MISSION LONG FOREKNOWN



Many prophets foresaw the role of Joseph Smith in the Restoration, and some assisted personally in this choice seer's work.

BY W. JEFFREY MARSH

As early as March 1829 the Lord declared to Joseph Smith, “This generation shall have my word through you” (D&C 5:10). At the time, the Prophet Joseph was 23 years old. He would live only 15 more years, but in those 15 very full years, he became the instrument through whom the Lord ushered in the dispensation of the fulness of times, when the Lord would “reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world” (D&C 124:41).

Ancient prophets knew that an apostasy from the early Christian church would necessitate a latter-day restoration from heaven.¹ Following the earthly ministry of Christ’s Apostles, priesthood authority was lost, ordinances essential for salvation were changed,

truths were removed or held back from the scriptures, and covenants were taken away.² These vital principles and ordinances could be restored only by revelation through the instrumentality of God Himself. Therefore, the Lord declared that in the latter days He would “bring forth . . . *in mine own power*, much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious” (1 Ne. 13:34, emphasis added).

As promised, God has manifested Himself in these latter days “in word, and also in power, [and] in very deed” (1 Ne. 14:1). Through the ministry of angels and revelations to modern prophets, God has restored the fulness of His gospel to the earth, bringing about what He called “a great and a marvelous work among the children of men” (1 Ne. 14:7).



A LIFE AND MISSION FOREKNOWN

The calling and mission of Joseph Smith, the first prophet of this marvelous Restoration, were known long before his birth. He “and other choice spirits . . . were reserved to come forth in the fulness of times to take part in laying the foundations of the great latter-day work” (D&C 138:53). He was “among the noble and great ones who were chosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church of God” and prepared before birth “to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men” (D&C 138:55, 56; see also Jacob 5:70–71).

In 1823 an angel named Moroni appeared to 17-year-old Joseph in Palmyra, New York, telling him that

“God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people” (JS—H 1:33). Consider the implications of that announcement. What were the chances that the prophecy could possibly come to pass given the time and circumstances in which Joseph Smith lived? Only a divine source could have known it would be fulfilled. But it *has* come to pass.

This was not the first time Joseph’s life and mission had been foretold. Prophets from all ages have known of him and prophesied of the work he would do.

Joseph of Egypt. One such prophecy was uttered by the ancient patriarch Joseph. He was promised by the Lord that a descendant of his—a “choice seer”—would



Events in the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith are written about in biblical prophecy. For example, the Apostle Peter wrote about the “times of restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21).

be raised up in the latter days (2 Ne. 3:6, 7). This seer would be “esteemed highly,” and his work would be of great worth to all mankind; in fact, this seer’s work would help “deliver” the Lord’s people in that day, as the work of Moses did in his day (see 2 Ne. 3:7, 9).

Joseph of Egypt said this choice latter-day seer would bring forth a record (the Book of Mormon) and other books (the Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and so forth) that would bear witness to the world that the scriptures already given (the Bible) are true (see 2 Ne. 3:11–12; see also JST, Gen. 50:30–33, Bible appendix; 1 Ne. 13:35–36, 39–41). The patriarch Joseph saw that these two records would “grow together” to confound false doctrine, establish peace, and bring people to a knowledge of the Lord’s covenants (2 Ne. 3:12).

Joseph prophesied that this seer would have the same name as he did—Joseph—and that the seer’s father would also be named Joseph (see 2 Ne. 3:15). With three older brothers, it was not mere coincidence that Joseph Smith Jr. received his father’s name.

Moses. The prophet Moses learned that Joseph Smith would restore lost scripture. The Savior revealed: “And now, Moses my son, I will speak unto thee concerning this earth upon which thou standest; and thou shalt write the things which I shall speak.

“And in a day when the children of men shall esteem my words as naught and take many of them

from the book which thou shalt write, behold, I will raise up another like unto thee; and they shall be had again among the children of men—among as many as shall believe” (Moses 1:40–41; emphasis added).

Joseph Smith was that prophet like unto Moses who restored Moses’ words to the biblical record.³ But as prophesied, only those who believe in Joseph Smith’s mission enjoy the refreshing insights of the doctrinal restoration.

Isaiah. The prophet Isaiah foresaw Joseph Smith’s work and even wrote of conversations Joseph’s associates would have regarding the translation of the Book of Mormon.⁴ Much of the prophecy in Isaiah 29 has reference to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.⁵

Malachi. Likewise, Malachi prophesied of a latter-day forerunner who would prepare the way for the Lord to come to His temple (see Mal. 3:1). On 3 August 1831, Joseph Smith dedicated the first site for a modern-day temple at Independence, Missouri.⁶ On 27 March 1836, he dedicated the Kirtland Ohio Temple (see D&C 109). It was in this temple that Joseph Smith’s divine mission was reconfirmed by the Savior and Joseph received priesthood keys from Moses, Elias, and Elijah (see D&C 110).

Elijah’s appearance in the Kirtland Temple signaled the fulfillment of another prophecy of Malachi—that Elijah would return to the earth



before the great and dreadful day of the Lord to restore the sealing keys of the priesthood lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse (see Mal. 4:5–6; D&C 2). When he appeared in the Kirtland Temple to Joseph Smith, Elijah announced that the prophecy of Malachi was now fulfilled and that by this we “may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors” (D&C 110:16; see also vv. 13–15).

In addition to building temples, through revelation the Prophet Joseph learned the purposes of temples⁷ and received the temple ordinances. As a result of his efforts and those of succeeding prophets (especially President Gordon B. Hinckley), there are more than 100 temples in operation or in construction and planning stages today. Nothing else in the history of modern Christianity compares to how Malachi’s prophecies have been fulfilled by latter-day prophets and the Latter-day Saints.

John the Baptist. John the Baptist had a knowledge of the prophet of the Restoration. When priests and Levites asked John if he was Elias or the Messiah, “he confessed and denied not that he was Elias [the forerunner]; but confessed, saying I am not the Christ.

“And they asked him saying, How then art thou Elias? And he said, *I am not that Elias who was to restore all things.* And they asked him saying, *Art thou that prophet?* And he answered, No” (JST, John 1:20–22, Bible appendix; emphasis added). Joseph Smith is the modern Elias spoken of by John the Baptist who was “to restore all things” (see D&C 132:40, 45).

Peter, James, and John. While returning from the Mount of Transfiguration, the Savior told Peter, James, and John about one who was to “come and restore all things, as the prophets have written” (JST, Matt. 17:14). The Apostles assumed He was referring to John the Baptist, but as the Savior explained further, they “understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist, and also of another who should come and restore all things, as it is written by the prophets” (JST, Matt. 17:14, Bible appendix; emphasis added). Joseph Smith, it seems from our perspective now, was this other prophet, to whom Peter, James, and John themselves appeared in 1829, restoring the authority and keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood which they held (see D&C 128:20).

The Savior’s Words to the Nephites. At the time of His appearance in ancient America, the Savior prophesied to the Nephites of the role that Joseph Smith eventually filled in bringing forth the Book of Mormon and beginning the Restoration (see 3 Ne. 21:1–11). The

Savior taught that this seer’s life would be safeguarded until his mission was completed: “The life of my servant shall be in my hand; therefore they shall not hurt him, although he shall be marred because of them. Yet I will heal him” (3 Ne. 21:10).

Joseph’s life and mission were marred. The translation of the Book of Mormon was temporarily interrupted by the loss of the first 116 pages, but God had prepared a way for the problem to be overcome and the translation to go forward (see D&C 10:6–19, 38–45). In 1832 he was tarred and feathered by a mob and left for dead. He said, “My friends spent the night in scraping and removing the tar, and washing and cleansing my body.” The next morning was the Sabbath, and with great faith and effort, Joseph kept a commitment to speak that day. His hearers included some of the mobbers from the night before. “With my flesh all scarified and defaced, I preached to the congregation as usual, and in the afternoon of the same day baptized

three individuals.”⁸ A few months later, while he was traveling through Indiana his dinner was poisoned.⁹ Bishop Newell K. Whitney administered to him and Joseph was healed immediately, although the effects of the poison caused him to vomit so violently his jaw became dislocated and to lose some of his hair. It is true that his life and mission were “marred” by opposition again and again, but he was preserved to finish the Lord’s work. President Brigham Young once said, “If a thousand hounds were on this Temple Block [Temple Square], let loose on one rabbit, it would not be a bad illustration of the situation at

times of the Prophet Joseph. He was hunted unremittingly.”¹⁰ And although the Prophet was slain for his testimony, the work he began continues to roll forward. President Young also said, “Why was he hunted from neighborhood to neighborhood, from city to city, and from State to State, and at last suffered death? Because he received revelations from the Father, from the Son, and was ministered to by holy angels, and published to the world the direct will of the Lord concerning his children on the earth.”¹¹

JOSEPH’S RELATIONSHIP WITH PROPHETS OF OLD

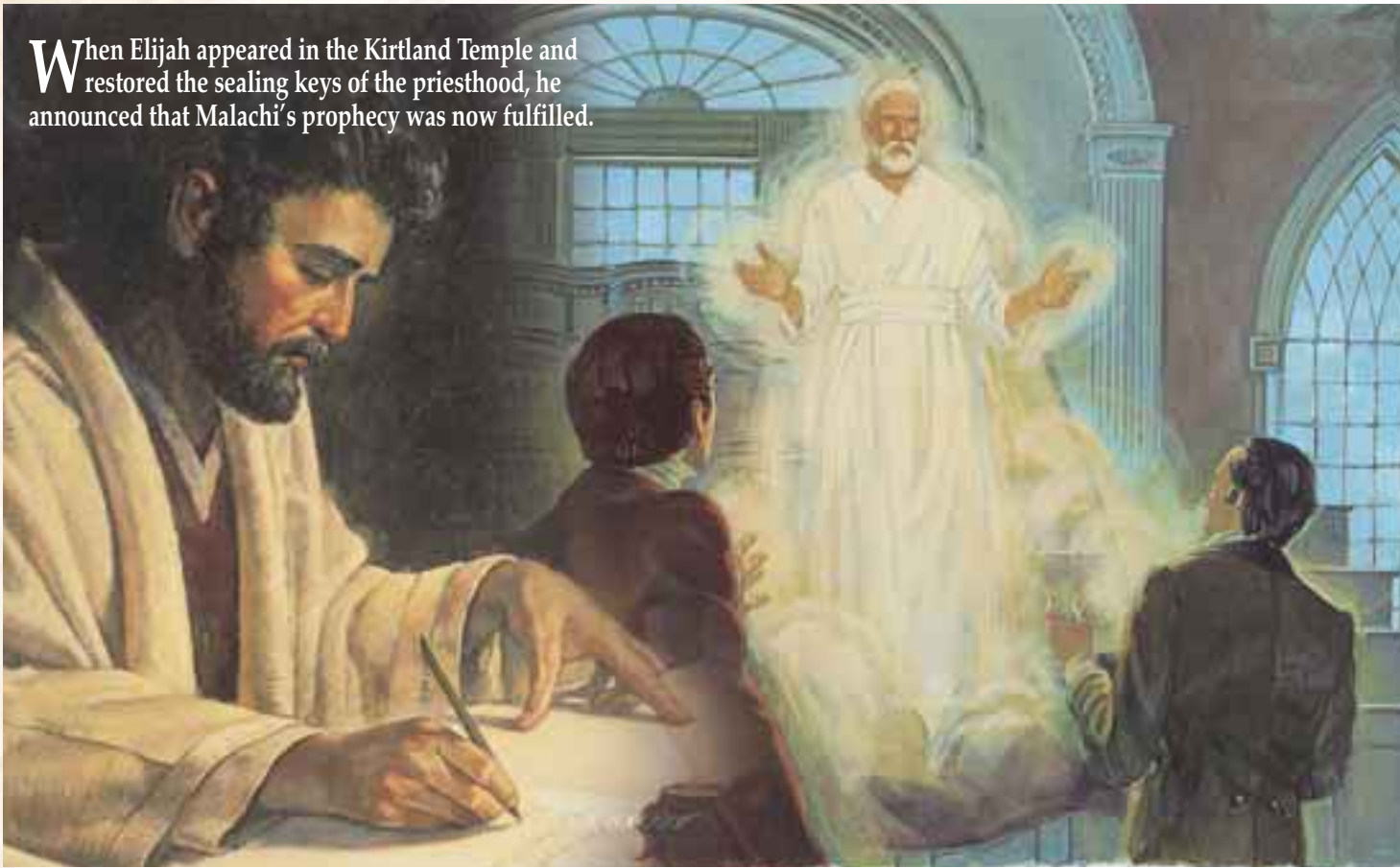
Those who read the scriptures become aware of these prophecies about a restorer. If Joseph Smith is not the foreseen prophet, who else could it possibly



PHOTO BY STEVE BUNDERSON

The Prophet Joseph Smith’s role in bringing the fulness of the gospel to people in the last days was foretold by Old and New Testament prophets.

When Elijah appeared in the Kirtland Temple and restored the sealing keys of the priesthood, he announced that Malachi's prophecy was now fulfilled.



be?¹² Not only did the ancient prophets know of Joseph Smith and prophesy of his mission, but he knew many of them personally.

In the spring of 1820, Joseph Smith was visited by the Father and the Son and also by “many angels.”¹³ The heavens opened again in 1823 when Moroni appeared, followed in subsequent years by a host of other heavenly messengers all declaring their dispensations, rights, privileges, and keys of authority (see JS—H 1:27–54; D&C 128:19–21; and Moro. 7:35–37).¹⁴

“Who among the world’s scholars,” one author wrote, “can boast of having stood face to face with Adam, Enoch, Noah, a messenger from Abraham’s dispensation, Moses, John the son of Zacharias, Peter, James, and John? While religious leaders were claiming that the heavens were sealed to them, Joseph Smith was being personally tutored by ancient prophets who laid their hands upon his head and conferred upon him the power, keys, and authority they held.

“... Who but Joseph Smith could tell us that Seth was in the perfect likeness of his father (D&C 107:43), or could give a detailed description of Paul”¹⁵ or describe personal visits with John the Beloved?¹⁶

Joseph knew the Bible, he knew its authors, and they knew him. He was heaven-taught and angel-tutored. Reflecting on his experiences, he said, “Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know

more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject.”¹⁷ And Joseph was blessed, many times, to have that view. President Daniel H. Wells (1814–91), a counselor in the First Presidency, testified: “It seemed to me that he advanced principles that neither he nor any other man could have obtained except from the Source of all wisdom—the Lord himself. . . . Where could he have got this knowledge and understanding, that so far surpassed all I had ever witnessed, unless it had come from Heaven?”¹⁸ Wilford Woodruff once observed, “He seemed a fountain of knowledge from whose mouth streams of eternal wisdom flowed; and as he stood before the people, he showed that the authority of God was upon him.”¹⁹

SPECIFIC EVENTS OF THE RESTORATION FORESEEN

All the major events of the Restoration were foreseen and foreknown.

The First Vision. Peter foretold “the times of refreshing [to] come from the presence of the Lord” when the Father and the Son would begin the restitution of all things (see Acts 3:19–21). In 1820 the Father and Son appeared to Joseph Smith, and the dispensation of the fulness of times began.²⁰

Angels to restore the gospel. John the Revelator foresaw that an angel would appear, “having the



everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth" (Rev. 14:6). The angel Moroni's appearances (1823–27) initiated the fulfillment of John's prophecy (see D&C 133:36–37). Subsequently, other angels appeared to assist in the Restoration.²¹

The Book of Mormon. Isaiah, Ezekiel, and King David all foretold the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.²² Enoch also saw in vision the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and the Book of Mormon "sweep[ing] the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth" to establish Zion (Moses 7:62).

In the tops of the mountains. Micah and Isaiah saw the Saints gathering to the tops of the everlasting mountains. There they would establish the "mountain of the Lord's house," to which "all nations shall flow" to learn of God's ways so they can "walk in his paths" (Isa. 2:2–3; see also Micah 4:1–2, Isa. 18:3).

Like Isaiah and Micah, the Prophet Joseph Smith prophesied of the Saints going west and settling in the tops of the mountains where the Church is now headquartered.²³ Other ancient

prophets knew the Saints would be organized "in the height of Zion," in the tops of the "everlasting hills" (Jer. 31:12; Gen. 49:26).

Worldwide growth. Nephi foresaw the growth of the latter-day Church: he said the Latter-day Saints would be few in number but would be over all the earth (see 1 Ne. 14:12). This prophecy is now being fulfilled in a marvelous way. The Church, which began with just six members, now numbers more than 11 million in over 150 nations.

Miraculous gathering of Israel to the gospel. Jeremiah foresaw the modern missionary force and the miraculous gathering of Israel. Missionary "hunters" and "fishers," as Jeremiah described them (Jer. 16:16), are now being sent to seek the righteous wherever they may be. Jeremiah said that the miracles accompanying the gathering of latter-day Israel via missionary work would be so astounding that those miracles would be spoken of more than the miraculous deliverance from ancient Egypt (see Jer. 16:14–15, 23:7–8).

Knowledge poured out. Daniel, Joel, and Isaiah foresaw modern developments and inventions assisting the growth of the gospel. For instance, Daniel said that "knowledge shall be increased" (Dan. 12:4). Joel said God would "pour out [his] spirit upon all flesh" and many would "dream dreams . . . [and] see visions" (Joel 2:28–29). Isaiah foresaw a time when the Lord's work would be hastened by swift travel across the earth (see

Isa. 18:1–3; 2 Ne. 15:26–27). Modern inventions in transportation and communication have paralleled (by divine design) Church growth.²⁴ The day approaches when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9).

An ensign waving to all the world. Isaiah described the Prophet Joseph as one to whom "rightly belongs the priesthood and the keys of the kingdom," who would establish "an ensign . . . for the gathering of [the Lord's] people in the last days."²⁵ In 1823, when the angel Moroni first appeared, he quoted Isaiah's prophecy and declared that it was about to be fulfilled (see JS—H 1:40). Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles identified Joseph Smith as the very person Isaiah was referring to.²⁶

The stone rolling forth. Daniel foresaw a stone cut out without hands that would roll forth and fill the whole earth (see Dan. 2:34–35). In 1831 the Lord identified His latter-day Church as that stone rolling forth and filling

the earth (see D&C 65:2, 6). It has been cut out by the hand of God and is now moving across the globe as foretold. Daniel said the restored Church would never be destroyed but would stand forever (see Dan. 2:44). The Prophet Joseph Smith reaffirmed Daniel's prophecy, declaring, "The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing."²⁷ President Gordon B. Hinckley has testified: "This cause will roll on in majesty and power to fill the earth. Doors now closed to the preaching of the gospel will be opened. The Almighty, if necessary, may have to shake the nations to humble

them and cause them to listen to the servants of the living God. Whatever is needed will come to pass."²⁸

Out of obscurity. The life of Joseph Smith and the early history of the Church were filled with persecution and seemingly insurmountable obstacles. However, the Savior inspired His small group of Saints with prophecies that His Church would one day be brought "out of obscurity and out of darkness."²⁹ It is happening as prophesied, as noted in this reminding refrain from one of our hymns:

*For God remembers still
His promise made of old
That he on Zion's hill
Truth's standard would unfold!
Her light should there attract the gaze
Of all the world in latter days.³⁰*



PHOTO BY JERRY GAINES

With more than 100 temples in operation, Latter-day Saints around the world participate in sealing ordinances spoken of by Malachi.

FULFILLING THE DIVINELY DECREED DESTINY

The fulfillment of all these and other great prophecies is truly a “marvellous work and a wonder” (Isa. 29:14). As Elder Robert L. Backman of the Seventy testified, “The Restoration is real, and it is gathering steam now to fulfill its destiny.”³¹ It is exciting to live in a day when the ancient prophets’ words are being fulfilled.

Under the Lord’s direction, the Restoration has been established in these latter days to bless the entire human family (see 1 Ne. 15:18). The gospel has been restored on the earth as a light, a standard, and as a messenger to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord (see D&C 45:9). This work will continue. “But,” as Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminds us, “all the easy things the Church has had to do have been done. From now on it is high adventure!”³² Ours is the great privilege of participating in the Lord’s work—the dramatic unfolding of the Restoration and the incomparable building of the latter-day Zion.

Not only did ancient prophets see Joseph Smith, they also saw the Saints living in the latter days. To those who build upon the foundation established by the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord has promised, “And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; and whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be” (1 Ne. 13:37). □

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Gospel topics: Church history, Joseph Smith, prophecy, Restoration

NOTES

1. See Isa. 24:5; Acts 3:19–21; 2 Thes. 2:3; Rev. 14:6–7; compare D&C 27:6, 13; 86:1–4; 128:19–21.
2. See 1 Ne. 13:26, 32; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 327.
3. Compare Gen. 1:1–6:13 to Moses 1–8 to examine a portion of what was restored by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

4. Compare Isa. 29:11–14 with JS—H 1:63–65.
5. Compare Isa. 29 with 2 Ne. 27.
6. *History of the Church*, 1:199.
7. See, for example, D&C 124:29–36.
8. *History of the Church*, 1:264.
9. *History of the Church*, 1:271.
10. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1941), 464.
11. *Deseret News Weekly*, 11 Oct. 1876, 582.
12. To read about other scriptural prophecies referring to Joseph Smith, see George A. Horton Jr., “Prophecies in the Bible about Joseph Smith,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1989, 20–25, and Richard Wadsworth, “Does the Book of Mormon Prophecy of the Prophet Joseph Smith?” *Ensign*, Apr. 1989, 52–53.
13. Milton V. Backman Jr., “Joseph Smith’s Recitals of the First Vision,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1985, 14.
14. Many testified of the divine messengers who appeared to Joseph. See Orson Pratt, *Deseret News Weekly*, 12 Jan. 1870, 577, and 2 Oct. 1872, 520; John Taylor, *Deseret News Weekly*, 2 June 1875, 276, and 2 June 1880, 290; and Wilford Woodruff, *Deseret News Semi-Weekly*, 20 May 1873, 1.
15. Joseph F. McConkie, “Joseph Smith and the Poetic Writings,” *The Joseph Smith Translation: The Restoration of Plain and Precious Things*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Robert L. Millet (1985), 118–19.
16. Diary of Oliver Boardman Huntington, typescript in Harold B. Lee Special Collections Library, Brigham Young University, 1847–1900, part 2, 162; cited in *New Era*, Dec. 1973, 12.
17. *Teachings*, 324.
18. *Deseret News Weekly*, 31 July 1867, 242.
19. Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 9 Apr. 1837.
20. See JS—H 1:15–20; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 284–85; LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, rev. ed. (1966), 34–35.
21. See *Mormon Doctrine*, 503.
22. See Isa. 29:4, 11–12, 14, 18; Ezek. 37:15–19; and Ps. 85:11.
23. See *History of the Church*, 5:85.
24. See Brigham Young as cited in Archibald F. Bennett, “Put on Thy Strength, O Zion!” *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1952, 720; Joseph Fielding Smith in Conference Report, Oct. 1926, 117; Spencer W. Kimball, “When the World Will Be Converted,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1974, 10–11; Howard W. Hunter, “We Have a Work to Do,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1995, 65; and W. Jeffrey Marsh, “Training from the



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President Gordon B. Hinckley has testified, “This cause will roll on in majesty and power to fill the earth.”

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

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

1. How does it change our perspective of the teachings of Joseph of Egypt, Moses, Isaiah, and others when we understand that ancient prophets knew not only of the coming of Christ but also of the latter-day Restoration?
2. How does it change our perspective on Joseph Smith when we understand that he knew the weight of his great prophetic calling?
3. What do we learn about our Heavenly Father when we consider the grand scope of the Restoration, realizing that its necessity was foreseen and its implementation planned before this world began?

- Old Testament: Moroni’s Lessons for a Prophet,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1998, 15.
25. Compare Isa. 11:10–12 with D&C 113:5–6.
 26. See D&C 113:3–6; Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah* (1982), 339–40.
 27. *History of the Church*, 4:540. On another occasion, he added, “I calculate to be one of the instruments of setting up the kingdom of Daniel by the word of the Lord, and I intend to lay a foundation that will revolutionize the whole world” (*Teachings*, 366).
 28. “Look to the Future,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 68.
 29. D&C 1:30; see also 109:72–74; Matt. 24:14; and *Teachings*, 392.
 30. “High on the Mountain Top,” *Hymns*, no. 5.
 31. “Go Ye Into All the World,” Salt Lake University Institute devotional address, 3 Feb. 1991, 1.
 32. *Wherefore Ye Must Press Forward* (1977), 84.

“TAKE HEED CONTINUALLY”

PROTECTING THE GOLD PLATES

The Prophet Joseph Smith went to great lengths to protect the priceless Book of Mormon plates from those who would “lay every plan and scheme” to wrest them from him.

BY ANDREW H. HEDGES

On 22 September 1823, 17-year-old Joseph Smith stood “not far from the top” of the Hill Cumorah’s west side.¹ There he obtained his first view of the gold plates and received instructions concerning them from the angel Moroni. Relating this experience to his family the following day, Joseph told them that “the angel of the Lord says that we must be careful not to proclaim these things or to mention them abroad, for we do not any of us know the weakness of the world, which is so sinful, and that when we get the plates they will want to kill us for the sake of the gold, if they know we have them.”²

This warning of Moroni's was not an idle one. Even before Joseph Smith received the plates four years later, various people were plotting how they might obtain them, and several attempts were made to wrest them from the Prophet's care once they were in his possession. Joseph's own record contains relatively little information on his efforts to keep the plates safe, but many who were associated with him during this period—including Lucy Mack Smith, Martin Harris, Joseph Knight Sr., and others—have left us with a rich record detailing Joseph's struggle to keep the plates out of wicked hands. The story that emerges from these accounts is one of faith and perseverance on the part of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his associates, and it constitutes one of the most interesting yet often unappreciated events of the Restoration.³

OBTAINING THE PLATES

Precisely how people knew of the plates' existence before the Prophet Joseph Smith obtained them is unclear. It is important to note, however, that the Smith family apparently did not take Moroni's warning about discussing the plates "abroad" to mean they could not mention them to trusted friends. Lucy Mack Smith reported that Joseph Sr. had mentioned them to one of his "confidential friends [Martin Harris] . . . some two or three years before" the Prophet actually received them.⁴ Similarly, Joseph Knight Sr. and Joseph Knight Jr. claimed that sometime within the year preceding Joseph's obtaining the plates, he had told them when he was supposed to get them. That Josiah Stowell was at the Smith home the night Joseph and Emma Smith went to the Hill Cumorah to get the plates suggests that he too may have been let in on the secret.⁵ No record exists of any of these men divulging the secret, but the possibility exists that over the course of the several years they may have known about the Nephite record, one of them might have inadvertently told others.

Word of the plates' existence might have gotten out through a more sinister source. According to Joseph Knight Sr., one Samuel Lawrence in the neighborhood was a "Seear" (seer) who had been "to the hill and knew about the things in the hill and . . . was trying to obtain them." Joseph Smith apparently was concerned enough about Lawrence that on 21 September, "near night," he sent his father to Lawrence's house "to see if there was any signs of his [Lawrence's] going away that night." Joseph reportedly told his father "to stay till near Dark and if he saw any signs of his going you

till [tell] him if I find him there [at the Hill Cumorah] I will thrash the stumps with him." Lawrence, fortunately for himself, chose to stay home that night.⁶ If Knight's account is accurate, it could be that Lawrence and perhaps others had learned of the plates' existence through information from adversarial sources.

Whatever the story behind the leak, the fact remains that by 22 September 1827, several people with wrong intentions knew of the plates' existence, knew roughly of their whereabouts, and knew that the time was approaching for Joseph Smith to obtain them. Joseph, however, was apprised of those people's knowledge and their determination to obtain the record for themselves, and took precautions against such an event. According to his mother's history, Joseph came to her about midnight on 21 September 1827 and asked her if she had a chest with a lock and

key. When she answered that she did not, he reassured her that all would be well. He and Emma then left the house for the Hill Cumorah with Joseph Knight's horse and wagon, having told no one that they were going.⁷

No account exists detailing everything that transpired that night at the Hill Cumorah. From Joseph Smith's own record, we know that Moroni met Joseph there and delivered the plates with the warning "that I should be responsible for them," wrote the Prophet, "that if I should let them go carelessly, or through any neglect of mine, I should be cut off; but that if I would use all my endeavors to preserve them, . . . they should be protected" (JS—H 1:59).

The Prophet's mother, no doubt getting her information from Joseph, recorded Moroni's words in greater detail:

"Now you have got the record into your own hands, and you are but a man, therefore you will have to be watchful and faithful to your trust, or you will be overpowered by wicked men, for they will lay every plan and scheme that is possible to get them away from you. And if you do not take heed continually, they will succeed. While they were in my hands I could keep them, and no man had power to take them away, but now I give them up to you. Beware, and look well to your ways, and you shall have power to retain them until the time for them to be translated."⁸

After receiving the plates at the hill, the Prophet hid them nearby in a hollow birch log whose tough bark had resisted the forces of decay better than the wood itself. Cutting a hole in the bark and peeling it back, he placed the plates in the cavity of the log thus exposed, then replaced the bark and "laid across the



Lucy Mack Smith has left us a rich record detailing her son's struggles to keep the plates out of wicked hands.

log in several places some old stuff that happened to lie near, in order to conceal, as much as possible, the place in which they were deposited.”⁹ All this was apparently done in the absence of Emma, who presumably was waiting in the wagon nearby.

Upon his return home, the Prophet’s mother told Joseph to go to a cabinetmaker she knew and ask him to make a chest in which Joseph could hide the plates when he brought them in from the woods. Concerned about how he would pay the cabinetmaker, Joseph accepted employment the next day, 23 September, to build a wall in the well of a widow living in Macedon. Although the job would require Joseph to stay in Macedon for several days, he evidently felt secure enough about the plates in the log to leave them there for the time being.

Shortly after the Prophet left for Macedon, Joseph Sr. learned of “ten or twelve men” who, under the direction of Willard Chase (a Methodist leader in the neighborhood) and Samuel Lawrence, had sent 60 miles for a “conjurator” to help them find the plates.¹⁰ The following morning Joseph Sr. went to Samuel Lawrence’s home, where he found the men “devising many plans and schemes to find ‘Joe Smith’s gold bible,’ as they termed it.” Sitting down near the door

and pretending to read a paper, Joseph Sr. overheard Lawrence’s wife caution the men to speak more quietly, at which the conjurator “bawled out at the top of his voice, ‘I am not afraid of anybody. We will have the plates in spite of Joe Smith or all the devils in hell.’”¹¹

Satisfied that he had heard enough, Joseph Sr. left. When he arrived home, he asked Emma if she knew where the plates were. Emma responded that she did not. Joseph Sr. then reported what had occurred at the Lawrence home. Emma offered to ride to Macedon and tell her husband of the men and the “conjurator,” to which Joseph Sr. consented. Meeting her husband at the widow’s well, Emma related everything to him, to which the Prophet responded, according to his mother, that “the record was perfectly safe, for the present.” Joseph nevertheless accompanied his wife home to the Smith farm, where he made preparations to immediately retrieve the plates from the log. After reassuring his father—who was pacing back and forth by this time—that all was well, Joseph asked Hyrum to have a chest with a good lock ready by the time he arrived home with the plates.¹²

With help from his father, the Prophet Joseph Smith removed several bricks from in front of the fireplace in the west parlor room of the Smith home and hid the plates in a dirt hole there.



A mob approached the Smith home by night and attempted to find the plates. They tore up the floor of a small outbuilding and failed to notice the plates just above their heads in the loft.



BRINGING THE PLATES HOME

The Prophet Joseph Smith apparently went to retrieve the plates immediately after arranging for the chest with Hyrum. Considering all that had already transpired that day, it must have been well after noon by the time Joseph removed the plates from their hiding place in the log. Once they were out of the log, Joseph wrapped them in his linen frock and started for home along the Canandaigua road, the record tucked under his arm. Leaving the road after “a short distance” for the safety of the woods, he eventually came to a “large windfall” where several trees had blown down.¹³ His mother wrote:

“As he was jumping over a log, a man sprang up from behind and gave him a heavy blow with a gun. Joseph turned around and knocked him to the ground, and then ran at the top of his speed. About half a mile further, he was attacked again in precisely the same way. He soon brought this one down also and ran on again, but before he got home, he was accosted the third time with a severe stroke with a gun.”¹⁴

Joseph struck this third and final attacker with such force that he dislocated his own thumb. He continued running, “being closely pursued until he came

near his father’s house,” at which time his assailants, “for fear of being detected,” broke off the chase.¹⁵ Reaching a fence corner, he “threw himself down . . . to recover his breath,” then rose and continued running until he reached the house.¹⁶

His mother and sister Catharine (or Katharine) were there when he came in. He “entered the house running,” the plates “clasped to his side with his left hand and arm, . . . his right hand . . . badly bruised from knocking down at least three men who had leaped at him from behind bushes or fences as he ran.”¹⁷ “Panting for breath,” the Prophet reportedly allowed Catharine to take the plates from him.¹⁸

After regaining his strength, the Prophet asked his mother to have his father, Joseph Knight, and Josiah Stowell go in pursuit of his attackers, and also to have Hyrum bring the chest. Hyrum, as it turned out, had indeed located an appropriate chest but had neither emptied it of its contents nor remembered his appointment with Joseph. Having been reminded of his duty by Don Carlos, Hyrum quickly dumped the contents of the chest on the floor and left to find Joseph, the chest on his shoulder. His houseguests—two of his wife’s sisters—were convinced by his sudden actions that he was “positively crazy.”¹⁹ After Hyrum arrived,

Joseph immediately locked up the record and, after a further rest on the bed, met with his father and the others who had returned after an unsuccessful search for his assailants. Joseph told them all that had happened, then asked his father to put his dislocated thumb back into place.²⁰

FURTHER PROBLEMS

With the arrival of the plates, life in the Smith home became increasingly difficult. Word quickly spread that Joseph had the plates in his possession, and numbers of people, some offering “money and Property” to sweeten the deal, dropped by to see them.²¹ Joseph refused, for which he and his family were “persecuted and abused.”²²

It was under these conditions that Joseph rushed to the house one day and asked his mother if “a company of men” had been by in his absence. When his mother told him that no one had come, he told her that “a mob would be there that night, if not before, to search for the record, and that it must be removed immediately.”²³ Enlisting the help of a trusted neighbor, the Prophet “carefully and speedily” removed part of the hearth in the west room, apparently transferred the plates to a second box, and relaid the hearth.²⁴ Moments later “a large company of armed men came rushing up to the house,” at which Joseph opened the door and called out “as if he had a legion at hand, giving the word of command with great importance.” He, his father, 11-year-old Don Carlos, and perhaps others rushed outside toward the mob at the same time. The ruse worked. The Prophet’s authoritative call to arms and the aggressive appearance he and his family made apparently convinced the mob that the house was heavily guarded, and they “fled . . . away into the woods.”²⁵

It was probably shortly after this that Samuel Lawrence made yet another attempt to get the plates. Joseph Knight recorded that Lawrence and one Beeman, “a grate Rodsman,”²⁶ showed up at the Smith home, wanting to talk with Joseph Smith. Joseph took them into the west room (the room in which the plates were hidden), where they “Proposed to go shares with him and tried every way to Bargain with him But Could not.” Beeman then reportedly “took out his Rods and hild [held] them up and they pointed Dow[n] to the harth where they ware [were] hid,” at the same time exclaiming that he had found them.²⁷ Knight did not record what happened next, but it is

probably safe to assume that Joseph breathed a sigh of relief once the two men left the house empty-handed.²⁸

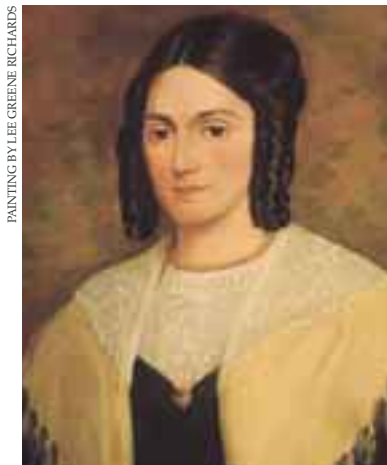
To make matters worse, the mob about this time enlisted the help of Willard Chase’s sister Sally in their efforts to obtain the plates. Sally Chase reportedly had a “green glass through which she could see many wonderful things” and had begun to apply her talents on behalf of her brother’s efforts to locate and obtain the plates. Thus, after “but a few days rest,” the Prophet “received another intimation of the approach of a mob and the necessity of removing the record . . . again from [its] hiding place,” and he dug up the plates.²⁹

Accounts vary as to what Joseph did next, but it seems that he hid the plates, still housed in the same box, under the floor of a cooper’s shop located just across the road.³⁰ After a “short time,” Joseph dug them up yet again, removed the plates from their box, reburied the box, and hid the plates—now wrapped in some clothing—in “a quantity of flax” being stored in the shop’s loft.³¹ The decoy worked. Following Sally Chase’s directions, the mob that night tore up the floor of the cooper’s shop and smashed the wooden box, but left the plates undisturbed in the loft a few feet above their heads.³²

After this harrowing experience, Joseph placed the plates in a third box. This one was made from an “old Ontario glass-box,” the ends of which an obliging neighbor cut off in order to make the box “the right length to put [the plates] in.”³³ By this time the “excitement in the vil-lage upon the subject [of the plates] had become such,” Martin Harris reported, “that some had threatened to mob Joseph, and also to tar and feather him.”³⁴ Several went a step further and actually took shots at Joseph, while his parents’ home “was frequently beset by mobs and evil designing persons” intent on

getting the record.³⁵ Realizing that he would never be able to translate the record while both he and the plates were in such jeopardy, Joseph wrote to Emma’s brother Alva, requesting him to come to New York and help him and Emma move to Harmony, Pennsylvania, where Emma’s parents lived. Alva quickly complied with Joseph’s request, while Martin Harris gave the Prophet some money with which he could pay his debts and finance the move to Pennsylvania.

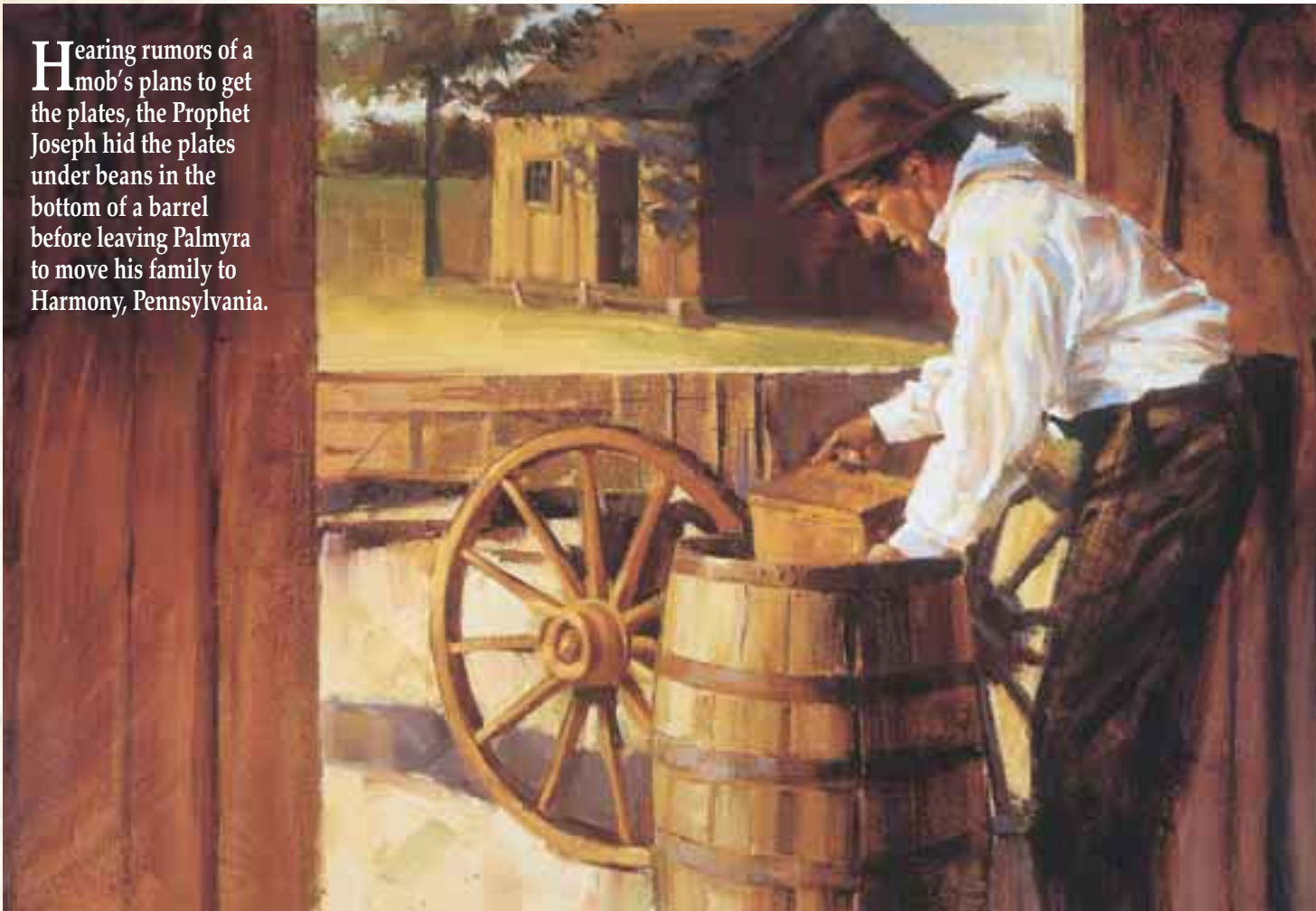
When they learned that Joseph Smith would shortly



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Emma Smith rode all the way to Macedon to tell her husband of a plot to find the plates. The Prophet responded, “The record [is] perfectly safe, for the present.”

Hearing rumors of a mob's plans to get the plates, the Prophet Joseph hid the plates under beans in the bottom of a barrel before leaving Palmyra to move his family to Harmony, Pennsylvania.



be moving to Pennsylvania, the mob in Palmyra and Manchester redoubled their efforts to obtain the plates. After threatening Joseph that “he should never leave until he had shown the plates,” some 50 men began laying plans for ways they might follow Joseph and rob him on his way to Harmony.³⁶ Seeking leadership for the enterprise, the mob approached the Smiths’ family doctor, one Dr. McIntyre, and requested him to “take the command of the company.” Dr. McIntyre, who had known and attended to the Smith family for years, told the group that “they must be a pack of devilish fools” and refused their offer, thereby bringing the expedition to a close before it even got started.³⁷

No doubt hearing rumors of the mob’s plans, Joseph Smith and his associates went to great lengths to see that the plates would make it to Harmony safely. First, they nailed the plates up in a box.³⁸ Then they placed the box in a “strong cask,” which they then filled “about one-third” full of beans to conceal the box. On the advice of Martin Harris, Joseph and Alva each armed themselves with a stout club. As a final precaution, they apparently made it known that they would be leaving Manchester on a Monday, then actually left two days earlier, on Saturday.³⁹

In spite of their precautions, the trip did not go without incident. Orson Pratt reported that Joseph, Emma, and Alva “had not gone far, before [they were] overtaken by an officer with a search-warrant, who flattered himself with the idea that he should surely obtain the plates.” When the search produced nothing, the three travelers were allowed to continue, only to be stopped a little later by another officer “on the same business.” After enduring another thorough but unsuccessful search of the wagon, Joseph and the others pressed on. They arrived at Emma’s parents’ home without further incident.⁴⁰

Thus ended the first difficult phase of the Prophet Joseph Smith’s guardianship over the plates. Little, if anything, had been accomplished by way of translating the record, pressed as the Prophet and his family had been by the mobs. Yet the record was safe, and in his struggles to preserve them Joseph no doubt had learned much about the ways of God and man that would serve him well in the time to come. □

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Gospel topics: Book of Mormon, faithfulness, Joseph Smith

NOTES

1. *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1835, 196.
2. Lucy Mack Smith, *The Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor (1996), 111.
3. For more on this topic, see Andrew H. Hedges, "All My Endeavors to Preserve Them," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8, no. 2, (1999) 14–23.
4. Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 140. See page 151 for Lucy's identifying this "confidential friend" as Martin Harris.
5. See Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 137.
6. In Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection," 32–33.
7. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 137.
8. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 145.
9. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 142–44. Martin Harris said Joseph hid the plates in the hollow top of an oak tree (see Joel Tiffany, "Mormonism—No. II," *Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, 165; quoted in Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* [1984], 217 n. 5).
10. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 140–41. President Brigham Young said that this conjuror "rode over sixty miles three times the same season they [the plates] were obtained by Joseph Smith," and that "the last time he went to obtain the treasure he knew where it was, and told where it was, but did not know its value" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 2:180).
11. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 141.
12. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 141–42.
13. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 144.
14. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 144. For a similar account by Joseph's sister Catharine, see *Saints' Herald*, 8 Oct. 1913, 983. Martin Harris said, "While on his way home with the plates, he [Joseph] was met by what appeared to be a man, who demanded the plates, and struck him with a club on his side, which was all black and blue. Joseph knocked the man down, and then ran for home, and was much out of breath" (*Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, 166).
15. Pratt, "A Interesting Account," 400.
16. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 144.
17. Herbert S. Salisbury, "Things the Prophet's Sister Told Me," 2 July 1945, Historical Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, typescript, 1.
18. Mary Salisbury Hancock, "The Three Sisters of Joseph Smith," *Saints' Herald*, 11 Jan. 1954, 12. Martin Harris, however, said that when Joseph reached the house, "he handed the plates in at the window, and they were received from him by his mother" (*Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, 166).
19. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 144.
20. See Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 145. William Smith said Joseph's father placed the plates in a pillowcase after Joseph's arrival, but when precisely he might have done this is not clear (see *Saints' Herald*, Oct. 1884, 643). The chest Hyrum had found had initially belonged to Alvin. It had been used to store small tools and, with the lid on, also functioned as a lap desk. It was 14 inches wide, 16 inches long, and 6 1/4 inches deep in the back, sloping to 4 inches deep in the front. The lid and bottom were made out of 3/4-inch walnut, and the sides out of 3/4-inch boxwood. This chest is in the possession of Eldred G. Smith.
21. Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection," 33.



The Prophet Joseph Smith kept the plates for a time in this box, lent to him by his brother Hyrum.

22. Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection," 33.
23. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 149. Joseph may have learned of the mob through the Urim and Thummim, which, according to Lucy, he kept with him constantly, and through which he could "in a moment tell whether the plates were in any danger" (142).
24. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 149. This second box may have been the "cherry box" Martin said was made expressly for the purpose of hiding the plates (see *Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, 166).
25. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 149.
26. In Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection," 33. This may have been the "conjuror" Willard Chase and Samuel Lawrence had hired from 60 miles away; see note 10. A "rodsman" was one who, through the use of a rod or rods, could locate things hidden from view.
27. In Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection," 33–34.
28. Before we dismiss Beeman's success at locating the plates as mere legend, we should note that Brigham Young said the man hired by Lawrence and Chase "possessed as much talent as any man that walked on the American soil, and was one of the wickedest men I ever saw" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 2:180).
29. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 150, 149.
30. See *Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, 167. Martin said Joseph hid the plates under the floor "by taking up a board and digging in the ground and burying them" (167).
31. *Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, 67; Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 149. The sequence of events presented here is a combination of the accounts given by Lucy Mack Smith and Martin Harris. Lucy did not mention Joseph's hiding the plates for a time under the floor of the cooper's shop.
32. See *Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, 167; Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 150.
33. *Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, 167. This "glass box" was a box in which windowpanes were stored and transported.
34. *Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, 170.
35. *History of the Church*, 4:538.
36. *Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, 170; see also Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 154.
37. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 154. Dr. McIntyre was the physician who tried to treat Alvin Smith after another doctor had incorrectly treated him with calomel. When Alvin died, Dr. McIntyre was one of the doctors who performed the autopsy. Lucy described him as "the favorite of the family and a man of great skill and experience" (115).
38. This was probably the glass box mentioned earlier. Isaac Hale wrote that when Joseph and Emma arrived in Harmony with the plates, Isaac "was shown a box in which it was said they [the plates] were contained, which had, to all appearances, been used as a glass box of the common size window-glass" (Susan Easton Black, "Isaac Hale: Antagonist of Joseph Smith," in Larry C. Porter, Milton V. Backman Jr., and Susan Easton Black, eds., *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: New York* [1992], 102).
39. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 154; *Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, 170.
40. Pratt, "A Interesting Account," 401.



CRADLE OF THE RESTORATION



The Joseph Smith Sr. family farm, with its grove of trees and log home, is sacred ground where the restored gospel of Jesus Christ was nurtured.



Above: Looking as they did when the Smiths lived here, the newly restored cooper shop, frame home, and barn are located on Stafford Road.
Left: After the Smiths were unable to make the last payment on the frame home, they eventually moved back into the log house in 1829. At the time, it was the home of son Hyrum and his wife, Jerusha Barden Smith.



Here, beginning in spring 1820, in Manchester Township, just south of Palmyra, New York, the 100 acres of the Joseph Smith Sr. farm became sacred space. A believing place. Holy ground.

Here in a grove of trees, Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to 14-year-old Joseph Smith Jr. Here the Smith family, who were the first to hear of the heavenly appearance, believed their son and brother Joseph. Here the angel Moroni appeared to the young prophet on numerous occasions and told him of a book written upon gold plates, which gave “an account of the former inhabitants of this continent” (JS—H 1:34).

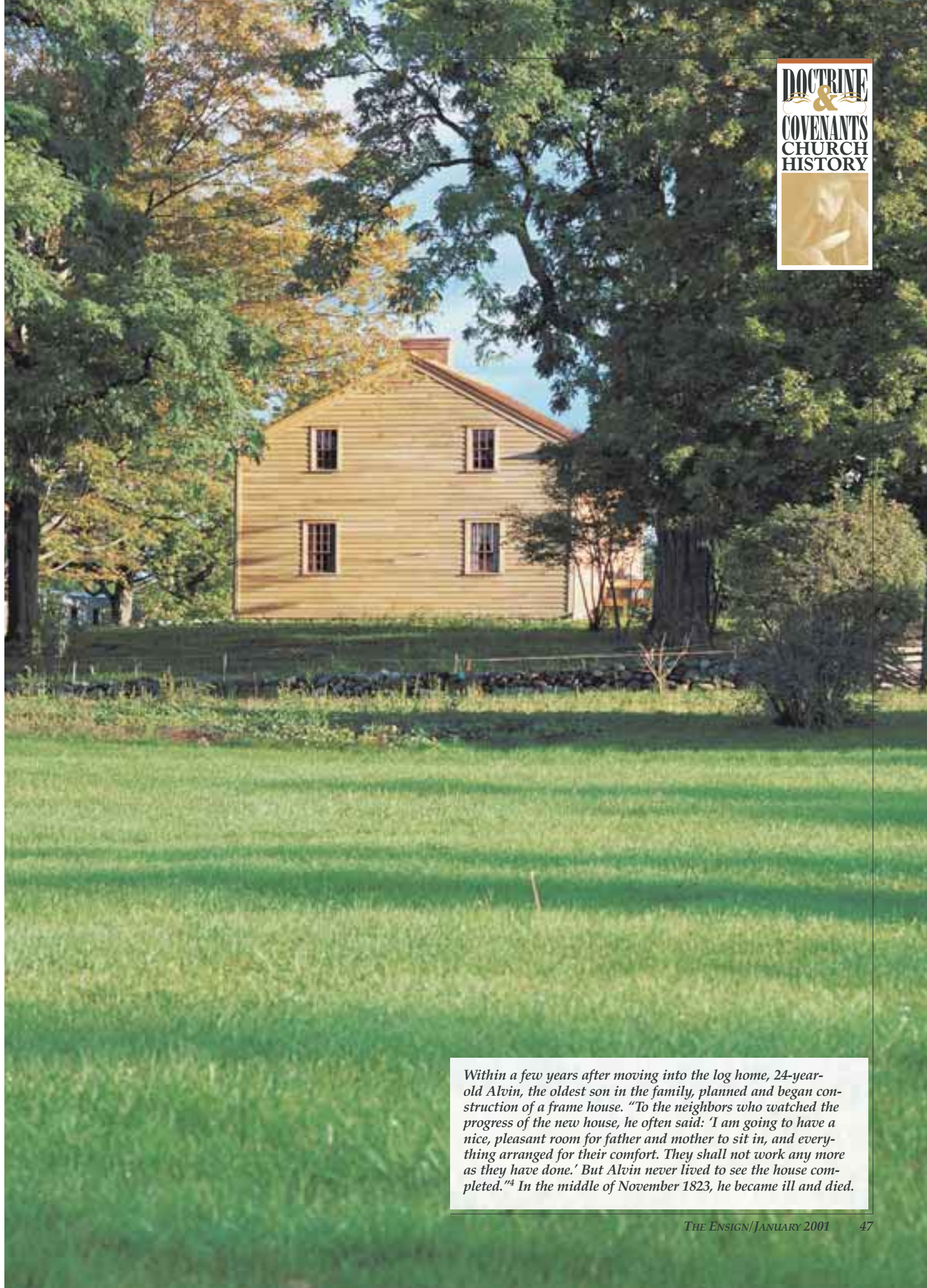
After 21-year-old Joseph received the plates in 1827, it was here—in the frame home and the cooper shop—that he hid the sacred records to protect them from antagonists until he could translate their inscriptions as the Book of Mormon.

And so it was that in the dawning of the dispensation of the fulness of times, the Smith family farm became the cradle wherein the restored gospel of Jesus Christ was placed, protected, and nurtured. Today the log home, frame home, cooper shop, barn, and farmland have been restored to their original state, making it easier for us to envision the sacred events that took place here.

Following are photographs of the Joseph Smith Sr. farm with a brief review of some events that took place here during the early years of the Restoration.

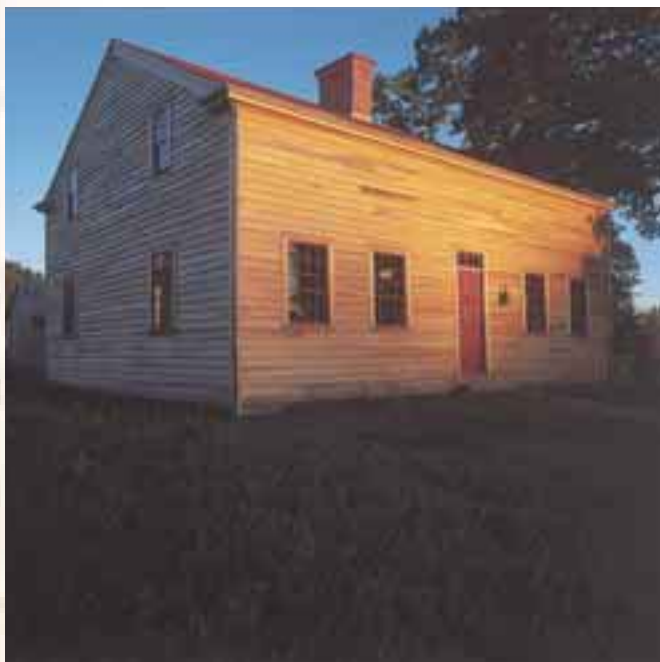


Above inset: "We had a snug log-house, neatly furnished,"¹ wrote Lucy Mack Smith of the log home with its two rooms on the ground floor and two sleeping rooms upstairs. Above: Of the evening of 21 September 1823, Lucy noted, "Joseph retired to his bed in quite a serious and contemplative state of mind."² Joseph later wrote of that night: "While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room. . . . A personage appeared at my bedside. . . . He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni."³ Right: The kitchen in the log house was likely the site of many intimate family discussions and joyous times.



Within a few years after moving into the log home, 24-year-old Alvin, the oldest son in the family, planned and began construction of a frame house. "To the neighbors who watched the progress of the new house, he often said: 'I am going to have a nice, pleasant room for father and mother to sit in, and everything arranged for their comfort. They shall not work any more as they have done.' But Alvin never lived to see the house completed."⁴ In the middle of November 1823, he became ill and died.

In the frame home (below left) and kitchen (below right), family prayers and reading from the Bible were a regular part of life. Son William remembered, "Father used to carry his spectacles in his vest pocket, and when we boys saw him feel for his 'specs,' we knew that was a signal to get ready for prayer, and if we did not notice it mother would say, . . . 'get ready for prayers.' After the prayer we had a song."⁵



The parlor of the frame home, with its hearth and windows facing west toward the Sacred Grove. This "beautiful grove [was] sufficiently dense and removed from the road to give the necessary seclusion the youth desired; and here on the morning of a beautiful, clear day in that early spring time, he knelt for the first time in all his life to make a personal, direct, verbal appeal to God in prayer."⁶

Here, one evening, Catherine and Sophronia were snuggled in the off-kitchen bedroom when someone noticed a group of men coming quickly toward the house. Joseph sprang to action, took the plates wrapped in cloth, and hid them in bed between the girls, saying, "Be as if you are asleep." Two men came into the room, one with a lantern, saw the sleeping girls, looked under the bed, and left.⁷



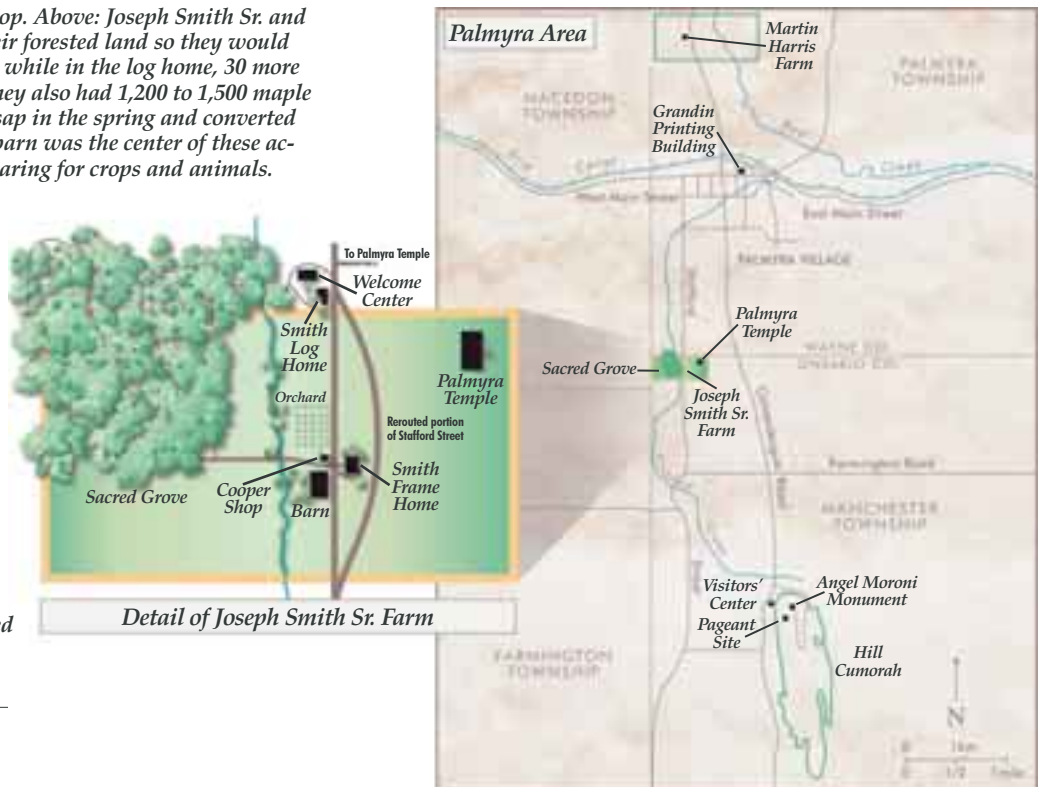
Above: The bedroom of Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith on the main floor in the frame home. Right: Joseph hid the gold plates in a wooden box beneath this hearth in the parlor. The plates were at risk at least twice while buried there (see "Take Heed Continually," by Andrew H. Hedges, on page 37 of this issue).



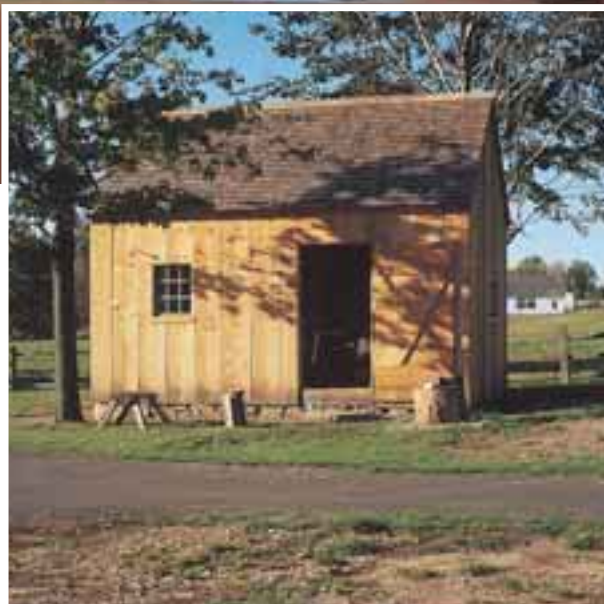
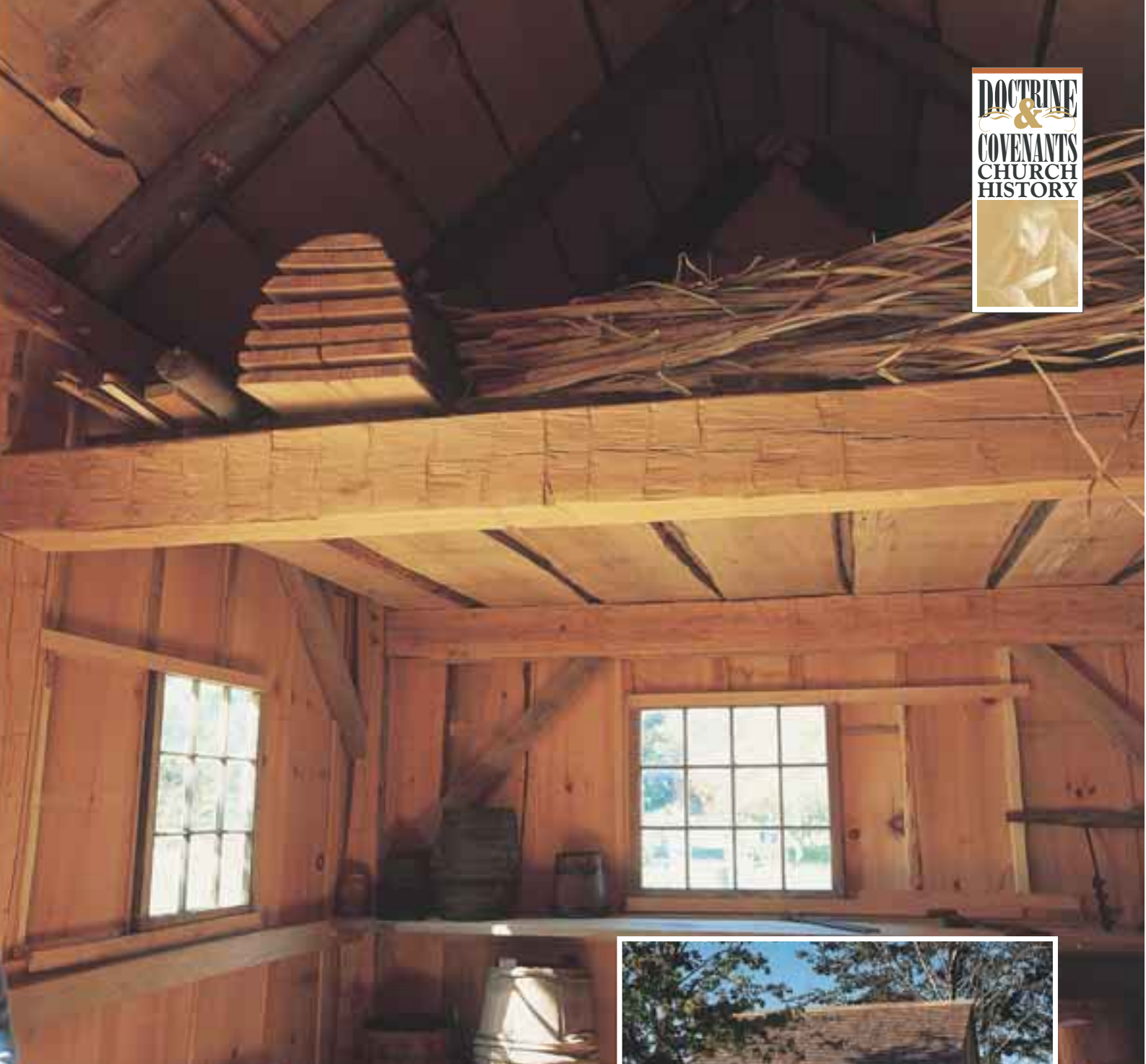


Above, inset: Barn and cooper shop. Above: Joseph Smith Sr. and his sons worked hard to clear their forested land so they would have tillable farmland—30 acres while in the log home, 30 more acres while in the frame home. They also had 1,200 to 1,500 maple trees, from which they gathered sap in the spring and converted it into molasses and sugar. The barn was the center of these activities in addition to the daily caring for crops and animals.

The 100 acres of the Smith farm sit on the line between Wayne County and Ontario County in New York. The log home and part of the Sacred Grove are in Palmyra Township, in Wayne County. The majority of the farm, including the frame home, barn, and cooper shop, is in Manchester Township, Ontario County. Note the village of Palmyra, which sits on the Erie Canal, north of the Smith farm; the Hill Cumorah about three miles southeast of the farm site; and the recently dedicated Palmyra New York Temple located in the northeast corner of the Smiths' original farm.



Detail of Joseph Smith Sr. Farm



Joseph moved the wooden box and gold plates from beneath the hearth in the frame home and hid them beneath the floorboards of the cooper shop (right). Then, having second thoughts, he dug them up again. He removed the plates that were wrapped in some cloth and hid them in the loft (above). He then reburied the empty chest under the floorboards. That night, a mob tore up the floor and smashed the empty box but failed to search the loft a few feet above their heads (see article on p. 37).

NOTES

1. *History of Joseph Smith*, ed. Preston Nibley (1942), 65.
2. *History of Joseph Smith*, 74.
3. JS—H 1:30–33.
4. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:32.
5. Quoted in Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:35.
6. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:53–54.
7. Mary Dean Hancock, “The Three Sisters of Joseph Smith,” transcript, page iii–7, RLDS Archives. Mary Dean Hancock is a granddaughter of Catherine Smith Salisbury.

FAITHFUL FROM THE FIRST



Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith, among the first to hear of the appearance of God the Father and Jesus Christ, faithfully and devotedly sacrificed the rest of their lives for the gospel restored through their son Joseph Smith Jr.

BY DONALD L. ENDERS

As the Prophet Joseph Smith administered ordinances associated with the endowment in the Kirtland Temple in January 1836, he beheld a vision of the celestial kingdom.¹ Searching for words to express “the glory thereof,” he described “the transcendent beauty” of its gate like “circling flames of fire,” its “beautiful streets,” and the Father and the Son seated on “the blazing throne of God” (D&C 137:1–4). To his great joy, he also saw his brother Alvin “and my father and my mother” (D&C 137:5).

Alvin had died 13 years earlier. His virtuous life, support of Joseph’s mission, and obedience to the commandments explain his exaltation.² However, Joseph’s parents were still alive, so how could their exaltation be shown?

The answer came as the Lord continued His explanation: “For I, the Lord, will judge all . . . according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts” (D&C 137:9).

What were the works and desires of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith—these faithful first believers of the restored gospel—that can inspire Latter-day Saints today in our own quest for celestial glory? To be brief, they sought the truth, they found it, and they cleaved to it thereafter (see Matt. 7:8).

In New England, they *sought* gospel truth. In New York, they *found* it. In Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, they *lived* true to the gospel, not shrinking from sacrifice, poverty, physical suffering, scorn of the world,

and sorrow at the deaths of loved ones. At all stages, they earnestly taught gospel principles to their family, offered selfless service, and testified consistently of God’s goodness.

SEEKING THE GOSPEL

As children, Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack were each raised in pious and industrious New England homes. Joseph, born in 1771 to Asael and Mary Duty Smith of Topsfield, Massachusetts, was the third of 11 children. Lucy, born in 1775, at Gilsum, New Hampshire, was the youngest of Solomon and Lydia Gates Mack’s eight children. Both sets of parents taught their children duty to God, hard work, family unity, literacy, and conduct suitable to polite society.

Both families, like many around them, were “seekers” who took the Bible and personal prayer seriously but felt that mainstream Christianity had departed from the Bible. They were consequently looking forward to a renewal of Christ’s Church. Joseph Sr.’s father, Asael, believed that a latter-day prophet would be born among his descendants. Lucy was deeply affected in childhood and youth by the goodness of her mother and the example of two older sisters who expressed unflinching faith, even in lengthy terminal illnesses. As a young woman, Lucy sought for “a change of heart” that would align her to God.³

At age 19, Lucy accompanied her brother Stephen



Joseph Sr. preceded Lucy and the children in the family's move to Palmyra, New York. When they were reunited, the children surrounded their father and covered his face with tears and kisses.



Led by Joseph Sr. and Lucy, the Smith family counseled together and conducted family business.

on a business trip to Tunbridge, Vermont, where she met 23-year-old Joseph. A year of friendship turned to love, and they were married on 24 January 1796. It was a promising union. They enjoyed good health, were surrounded by kin and friends, and had money set aside. According to traditional New England culture, such prosperity and social acceptance were signs of favor with God. But during the 20 years they lived in neighboring Vermont and New Hampshire towns, Joseph and Lucy learned the hard but important lesson that life was not as simple as that.

When they moved to Palmyra, New York, in 1816, they had been tried in every possible way. Two of their 10 children had died.⁴ They had been impoverished by a national economic downturn and a dishonest business associate. Poor weather had caused crop failures three seasons in a row. Lucy came near death from the consumption that had killed her two sisters. A typhus epidemic attacked all of Joseph and Lucy's children. Little Sophronia's life was spared only after her parents poured out their hearts on their knees by her bedside with "grief and supplication." And young

Joseph, age seven or eight, suffered a bone marrow infection as a complication that required almost-crippling surgery. The family's good reputation had also suffered along with their fortunes, and they were "warned out" of the Vermont village where they lived so that the town would not be required to provide assistance.⁵

It was also a time of spiritual tempering. When Lucy had been given up to die from consumption, she covenanted to serve God all her days and to seek "the religion that would enable [her] to serve him right," even if "obtained from heaven by prayer and faith."⁶ She was healed and faithfully sought that religion for the next two decades, not yet understanding that her own son would introduce her to it. "For days and months and years," without ceasing, she "continued asking God . . . to reveal . . . the hidden treasures of his will."⁷ Joseph Sr.'s mistrust of organized religion did not let him share her quest among the churches she had access to, but it did not become a source of contention between them. Rather, she prayed sincerely for consolation and was comforted by a dream assuring her that Joseph Sr. would accept the truth when it was presented to him.⁸



Lucy wrote, "We felt more to acknowledge the hand of God in preserving our lives through such a desperate siege of disease, pain, and trouble than if we had enjoyed health and prosperity."⁹ They forgave their debtors, paid their debts, and unitedly sought to better their fortunes by moving to western New York.

Joseph Sr. preceded Lucy and the children to Palmyra. By the time the family was reunited, their ready money had been reduced to a few cents. But that arrival showed two important traits of the family. First was their unconcealed joy at being reunited. Lucy wrote that she felt joy "in throwing myself and my children upon the care and affection of a tender husband and father" and witnessing the children "surround their father, clinging to his neck and covering his face with tears and kisses that were heartily reciprocated by him."¹⁰ And second was a united approach to solving their problems. Lucy said, "We all now sat down and maturely counseled together as to what course it was best to take [and] how we should proceed to business."¹¹ Joseph Sr., Alvin, and Hyrum worked to pay for land. To maintain home and to replenish provisions, Lucy, aided by Sophronia and the younger children, took care of household chores and sold Lucy's oilcloth art. They also made baked goods and root beer, which young Joseph sold in the village from a homemade handcart.

FINDING THE GOSPEL

The family's united effort greatly improved their material circumstances. Two years after arriving in Palmyra as "strangers, destitute of friends, home, or employment," Lucy wrote, "we were able to settle ourselves upon our own land [in] a snug, comfortable, though humble habitation, built and neatly furnished by our own industry."¹²

Lucy's unceasing hunger for spiritual truth was about to bear fruit. In the spring of 1820, her 14-year-old son Joseph experienced the First Vision, wherein he saw the Father and the Son, his sins were forgiven, he was commanded to join no church, and he was instructed that the fulness of the gospel was soon to be restored.¹³ Three years later, the heavenly messenger Moroni instructed Joseph that he had been chosen by the Lord to bring forth an ancient book that contained "the fulness of the everlasting Gospel" (JS—H 1:34).

Moroni also instructed Joseph to tell his father of the visitation, which he did. His father fully believed, and Joseph had the complete support of his family, including his brothers and sisters. "We were convinced that God was about to bring to light something that we might stay our minds upon," wrote Lucy. "We rejoiced in it with exceeding great joy."¹⁴

She records a tender memory of the entire family, gathered at the fireside after the day's labor, listening to young Joseph with the greatest attention as he

recounted to them incidents from the Book of Mormon. "The sweetest union and happiness pervaded our house; no jar nor discord disturbed our peace and tranquility reigned in our midst."¹⁵ Lucy and Joseph Sr. realized this treasure was eternal, while the world could offer only vain things.

Sweet though this knowledge was, the seven years between Moroni's first visit on 21–22 September 1823 and the organization of the Church on 6 April 1830 were a time of great testing for Joseph and Lucy. They arranged to purchase 100 acres of forest land over the town line in Manchester, New York; began clearing the land; built a log home, barn, and outbuildings; planted an orchard; and began building a large New England-style frame house. By 1830 the farm was numbered among the better ones in the township and was known for its "neatness and arrangement."¹⁶

A bitter blow fell when Alvin suddenly died, only six weeks after the angel Moroni's visitation. The family's "happiness [was] blasted in a moment," and Joseph, Lucy, and the children "were for a time . . . swallowed up in grief."¹⁷ On the heels of this sorrow, they lost the title to their farm. Alvin had earned enough money for all but the last payment "after much labor, suffering, and fatigue" before his death and had also begun the construction of their new frame home.¹⁸ When the first land agent died, there was a misunderstanding, and through deception the carpenter they hired to finish their home acquired the deed. A Quaker gentleman came to their rescue, purchasing the land and allowing them to live in the house and on the farm for the next four years in exchange for their son Samuel's work.

One of Lucy's most poignant memories is her distress when she realized that they were going to lose the home that had been designed by her beloved Alvin for the express purpose of seeing that she and Joseph Sr. would be comfortable in their old age. "I was overcome and fell back into a chair almost deprived of sensibility," she wrote. She asked Hyrum: "What can this mean? . . . How . . . is [it] that all which we have earned in the last 10 years is taken away from us in one instant?"¹⁹ Her feelings were natural, but when they had to move from the home three years later, she told Oliver Cowdery, who was boarding with them: "I now look around me upon all these things that have been gathered together for my happiness which has cost the toil of years. . . . I now give it all up for the sake of Christ and salvation, and I pray God to help me to do so without one murmur or a tear. . . . I will not cast one longing look upon anything which I leave behind me."²⁰

She was speaking for her husband as well. What they left behind was more than a comfortable home. Resentment had grown steadily toward them because

of Joseph's spiritual experiences. Most of their former neighbors and friends shunned them; some actively lied about them. Others took advantage of them, ransacked their property, and pressed petty lawsuits.

To Joseph and Lucy's credit, they did not become bitter and vindictive. "We doubled our diligence in prayer before God that [our son] Joseph might be more fully instructed and preserved," wrote Lucy.²¹ They were the first to know of and accept Joseph Jr.'s calling, sorrowed with him when the first 116 pages of the Book of Mormon were lost, helped guard the plates, heard the testimony of the Three Witnesses, and were among the earliest to be baptized. Joseph Sr. and two sons, Hyrum and Samuel, were among the Eight Witnesses.

In a sweet moment, Lucy was nearly overawed by the realization that "I [am] indeed the mother of a prophet of the God of heaven—the honored instrument in performing so great work."²² In another unforgettable moment, her prophet son embraced his father immediately after Joseph Sr.'s baptism and exclaimed, "[Praise to] my God! have I lived to see my own father baptized into the true church of Jesus Christ!"²³

LIVING THE GOSPEL

Joseph and Lucy's search for religious truth extended from their youth through 34 years of marriage. For the remaining 10 years before Joseph Sr.'s death in 1840, they walked steadfastly on the path before them with confidence that if they served God with all their hearts, they would stand blameless before Him at the last day (see D&C 4:2).

Joseph and Lucy never again owned a home of their own. In Kirtland they lived on a farm a short distance out of town that had been made available to Joseph Jr. Here they lodged, fed, and preached to "droves of company" who were gathering to Kirtland, "breaking [them]selves down with hard work."²⁴ In Missouri the Prophet Joseph arranged for them and his married sisters to manage an inn in Far West. In Nauvoo, with Joseph Sr. in his final illness, they lived in a small dwelling near Joseph Jr.'s home. Yet their straitened circumstances did not hinder them in fulfilling their baptismal covenant of bearing one another's burdens and standing as witnesses of the gospel (see Mosiah 18:8–9).

Lucy was skilled at nursing, and Joseph was

supportive. A Palmyra neighbor praised them as "the best family in the neighborhood in case of sickness, and one was at my house nearly all the time when my father died."²⁵ At Far West, Lucy willingly assumed the care of "20 or 30 sick . . . during the mobbing."²⁶ When Nauvoo was first settled and "scores of children were dying with the Black Canker" (scurvy), the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum "set apart their dear mother to labor and nurse the sick." She "spent months amongst the poor, sick Saints."²⁷ A young neighbor called Lucy "one of the finest of women, always helping them that stood in need."²⁸

Joseph and Lucy hospitably shared what they had. In the pre-Church years, they welcomed an orphan boy into their home as well as two elderly folk. A newlywed couple lived with them for several months in Kirtland. In Kirtland, Missouri, and Nauvoo, they often gave every bed in the house to guests, while

Joseph and Lucy shared a single blanket on the floor. They fed new arrivals and missionaries, hosted Church councils and meetings, made their home a haven where patriarchal blessings could be given in a spiritual environment, offered personal counsel and doctrinal discussions, and held a family devotional with hymns and prayers every evening.

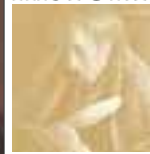
Their testimony of the gospel's truthfulness strengthened members and challenged critics. A Palmyra resident purchased Joseph Sr.'s note

and demanded instant payment but offered to forgive the debt if he would burn the Book of Mormon. Even though he was ill, Joseph refused and went to debtors' prison for several weeks.

Ordained an elder in June 1830, Joseph Sr. promptly preached the gospel to his parents and siblings. Despite bitter opposition and indifference on the part of some, his joy was great when his brothers John, Asael Jr., and Silas converted and gathered with the Saints. At age 65, as Patriarch to the Church, he set out on a patriarchal mission to members in the eastern United States.²⁹ By the time of his death, he had given several hundred patriarchal blessings of encouragement and inspiration. He served on the Church's first high council at Kirtland and in 1834 was ordained with Hyrum as Assistant President of the Church. At the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, this aged servant of the Lord beheld marvelous things.³⁰



Initially distressed at losing her home, Lucy found strength in her faith. "I now give it all up for the sake of Christ," she said. "I will not cast one longing look upon anything which I leave behind."



Joseph and Lucy hospitably shared what they had. In Kirtland, Missouri, and Nauvoo, they often filled their house with guests, even offering their own beds.

Lucy was not one whit behind him in valor. When an officer in Lucy's former church pressed her to deny the Book of Mormon, she defied him: "Even . . . should [you] stick my body full of faggots and burn me at the stake I would declare that record . . . to be true, as long as God gave me breath."³¹

On another occasion when some of the elders felt that identifying themselves as Latter-day Saints would bring persecution upon them, Lucy boldly stated, "I [will] tell the people precisely who I [am]."³² When a minister scoffed that the Book of Mormon was beneath his notice, Lucy testified, "Sir, let me tell you boldly, that the Book of Mormon contains the everlasting gospel, and it was written for the salvation of your soul, by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost."³³ Seven months after the murders of Joseph and Hyrum, Lucy, speaking for herself and her dead husband, claimed, "It has been in our hearts to fetch forth this Kingdom that it may roll forth."³⁴

Both Joseph Sr. and Lucy received all the temple ordinances then available to Church members. For Joseph Sr., these were preparatory ordinances in the Kirtland Temple. Lucy received her initiatory ordinances and endowment in the Nauvoo Temple on 10 December 1845.

LESSONS FROM LUCY AND JOSEPH

What are the lessons for us today from these faithful believers? First, as parents they taught their children to obey the gospel, to work hard, and to pray unceasingly for guidance and desired blessings. Their examples matched their precepts.

Second, they set the example for their children of valuing truth wherever they found it. They willingly, even joyously, learned from their children instead of feeling that as parents they needed to know all the answers.

Third, devotion to the gospel was their first priority. Even when they were called to endure poverty, hopelessness, illness, and scorn, they did not waver in their allegiance to the truth.

Fourth, although they had few means, they shared them willingly and served the other Saints and the community to the limits of their strength.

Fifth, they kept their family together. Whether driven by persecution or drawn by the gathering, Joseph and Lucy, in following the Saints, took even their married children with them, nurturing their faith, nursing them when ill, and providing loving support.

Sixth, they endured to the end. Despite trials and suffering that might have embittered them and caused them to question their faith, they remained devoted. In 1840 Joseph Sr. died, surrounded by his family and the Saints. At the time he was serving as Patriarch to the Church. Seventy-year-old Lucy remained in Nauvoo with her four living children and her daughter-in-law

Emma when the Saints left in 1846, but Lucy's faith in her son Joseph's mission never wavered.

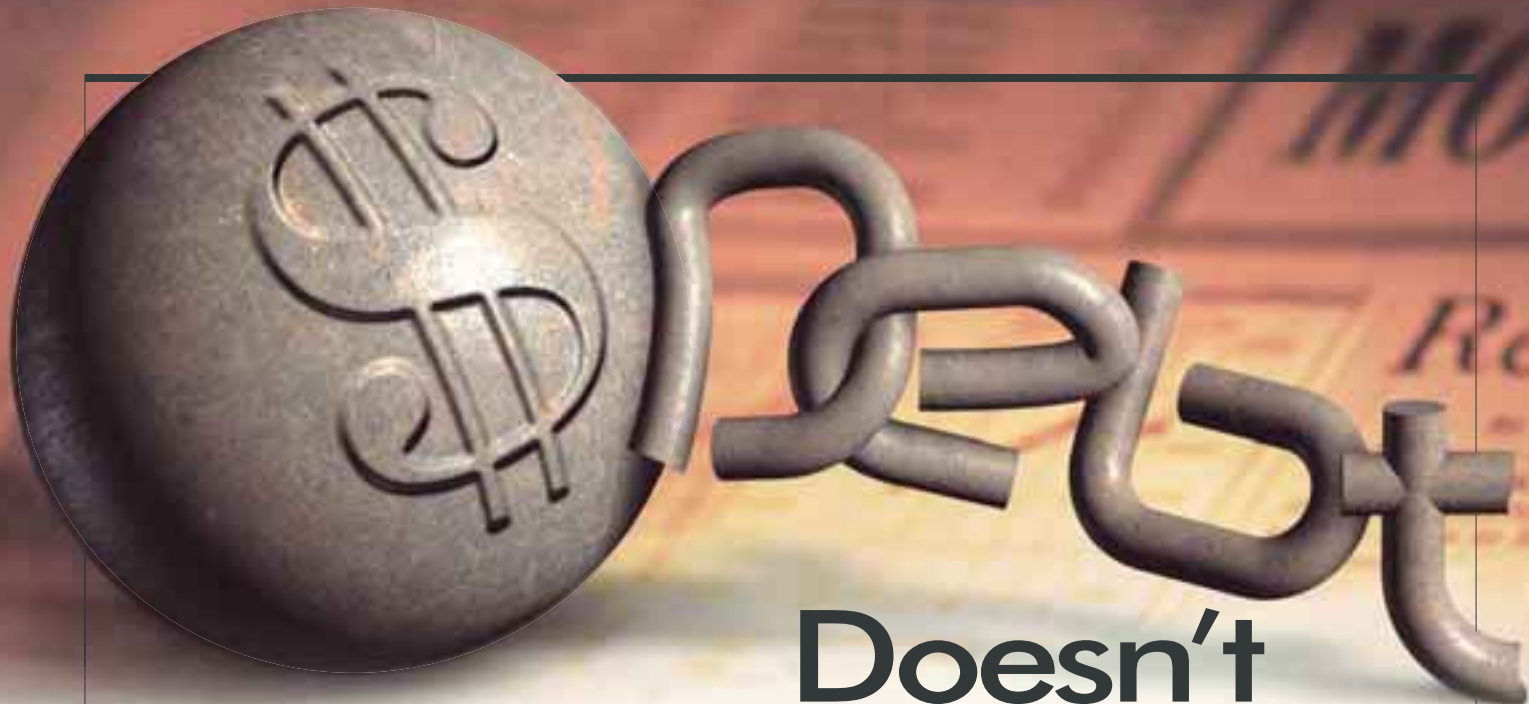
As first believers, she and her husband set a standard of exemplary parenthood and of devotion to each other and to the truth. Their example lights the way for all Latter-day Saint families in our own day. □

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Gospel topics: faith, obedience, parenthood, sacrifice

NOTES

1. See D&C 137, section heading; *History of the Church*, 2:380–81.
2. Because Alvin had not had the opportunity of being baptized in this life, Joseph was astonished to see him exalted. Then the voice of the Lord explained that Alvin was among those who would have received the gospel if given the opportunity (see D&C 137:7). The ordinance of baptism for the dead, publicly revealed in Nauvoo 17 years after Alvin's death, opened the way for Alvin to receive that ordinance vicariously.
3. Lucy Mack Smith, "The History of Lucy Smith," Historical Department, Archives Division, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 31; spelling, capitalization, and punctuation modernized throughout.
4. These 10 children included an unnamed infant son, Alvin, Hyrum, Sophronia, Joseph, Samuel, Ephraim (who died as an infant), William, Catherine, and Don Carlos. A final daughter, Lucy, was born at Palmyra (see Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. [1989–92], 1:xliv).
5. "The History of Lucy Smith," 32–44; Dan Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3 volumes (1996–2000), 666–68.
6. "The History of Lucy Smith," 33.
7. "The History of Lucy Smith," 120.
8. *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Preston Nibley (1958), 43–45.
9. "The History of Lucy Smith," 44.
10. "The History of Lucy Smith," 47.
11. "The History of Lucy Smith," 47.
12. "The History of Lucy Smith," 49.
13. Milton V. Backman Jr., "Joseph Smith's Recitals of the First Vision," *Ensign*, Jan. 1985, 16.
14. "The History of Lucy Smith," 54.
15. "The History of Lucy Smith," 54.
16. Tax Records, 1830, Manchester Township, Ontario Co., New York, microfilm copy, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Family History Library, Salt Lake City; "The History of Lucy Smith," 67.
17. "The History of Lucy Smith," 59–60.
18. "The History of Lucy Smith," 48.
19. "The History of Lucy Smith," 65.
20. "The History of Lucy Smith," 105.
21. "The History of Lucy Smith," 56.
22. "The History of Lucy Smith," 121.
23. Quoted in Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (1984), 144.
24. "The History of Lucy Smith," 169.
25. Orlando Saunders, as quoted in *Saints' Herald*, 1 June 1881, 165.
26. Ronald W. Walker, "The Historian's Corner," *BYU Studies*, winter–spring 1992, 280.
27. Aroet Lucius Hale Reminiscence, Church Archives, 2 vols., 1:25–26; spelling, capitalization, and punctuation modernized.
28. Sally Parker of Sunbury, Ohio, to John Kempton of Farmington, Maine, 26 Aug. 1838, transcript, Church Archives; spelling, capitalization, and punctuation modernized.
29. See *History of the Church*, 2:446–47.
30. See Lyndon Cook, "The Apostle Peter and the Kirtland Temple," *BYU Studies*, summer 1975, 551.
31. "The History of Lucy Smith," 122.
32. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 199.
33. "The History of Lucy Smith," 150.
34. Young and Richards Family Gathering, Nauvoo, Illinois, 8 Jan. 1845, 17, typescript, Church Archives.



Doesn't Have to Be Forever

BY BERNARD PODUSKA

Despite a firm resolve to get out of debt, many find their best efforts stymied. Honesty with oneself prepares the way.

We are living during a time of abundance, but we are a people burdened with debt. President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: "Reasonable debt for the purchase of an affordable home and perhaps for a few other necessary things is acceptable. But from where I sit, I see in a very vivid way the terrible tragedies of many who have unwisely borrowed for things they really do not need" ("I Believe," *Ensign*, Aug. 1992, 6). Those of us in debt usually have a gnawing desire to pay off our creditors someday, but unfortunately our best intentions to stay out of debt sometimes get tangled up in our deep feelings, longings, and unfulfilled wants and needs.

At first glance, the behavior of those who seem to be chronically in debt may appear irrational or irresponsible. Even in the face of cold reality, some persist in consuming well beyond their income level or reasonable ability to repay creditors. What compels people to jeopardize their economic well-being? Why are some people always in debt? The answers are complex, but with the help of the Lord, it is possible to learn the truth about ourselves. For many people, discovering the answers to such questions can become the key to financial stability.

Money evokes strong feelings in most people. Sometimes feelings are hurt over seemingly small

occurrences, such as failure to split a restaurant check or forgetting to return someone's change. Larger monetary issues can cause the breakup of a marriage, destroy a friendship, or tempt one to dishonesty. Because our feelings are so deeply involved, it may be helpful to look at some of our attitudes about money. The following are some of the more common reasons people remain chronically in debt. At the end of each section are questions and ideas that may help some to overcome such problems.

FILLING UNMET NEEDS



Most people arrive at adulthood with a number of ghosts from the past. When important needs are not adequately met as a child or later as an adult, they can sometimes surface as unspecified cravings. Having the ability to buy things for themselves may temporarily fill the emptiness inside. However, such measures seldom



address underlying problems. A maxim describes this problem: “You can never get enough of what you don’t need, because what you don’t need can never satisfy you.” Trying to meet unfulfilled needs through the wrong means, such as buying something for ourselves or others in an attempt to feel loved, can provide fleeting satisfaction while leaving us empty. Yet such needs can pull so strongly that people ignore financial warning signals in order to satisfy their deeper yearnings.

Mark, married five years, was feeling especially lonely. One morning he saw a picnic table on sale and insisted on buying it. He brought it home with visions of family parties in his head. Once he had it assembled on his own patio, he sat down to enjoy his purchase. As he sat there, the same lonely feelings he had experienced earlier that morning washed over him again. He realized the picnic table had not brought him the satisfaction he had hoped for. In a moment of clarity he admitted to himself that he had really been looking for the warmth and security he had experienced with his father on their many family outings before his death a year earlier.

Before spending money, ask:

1. *Why do I really want this?*

2. *How will I feel if I decide to wait awhile before buying it?*

When we find it difficult to delay gratification, we may be dealing with an underlying emotional problem that needs to be faced honestly. Being honest with ourselves means acknowledging legitimate needs and wants and separating them from empty longings that can motivate us to act unwisely. Asking in prayer for clarity and understanding may help us recognize the best way to meet our longings. As we become more honest with ourselves about our underlying motives,

we can find more efficient ways to meet our emotional—and financial—needs.

MEETING THE TEMPORAL NEEDS OF OUR CHILDREN



In most cases, taking care of our children’s basic *needs* is possible. Satisfying their *wants* may be a little more difficult and even confusing if a parent’s emotional needs get in the way. Because our love for our children is often mixed with painful memories and regrets from our own childhood, we may attempt to protect our children from the normal pains, struggles, and embarrassments that are part of the growing-up process.

While shopping with her daughter Amanda, Martha remembered a time as a child following her mother into a secondhand store to buy school clothes and worrying that someone from school might see where financial circumstances forced them to shop. Her mother headed directly to the far corner of the store where the children’s shoes were stacked against the wall, muddled through the piles, then picked up a pair of open-toed shoes with ankle straps and one broken buckle.

“Try these on,” her mother insisted. “They’re a little scuffed up, but I’ve got some white shoe polish at home that will make them look as good as new.”

Martha remembered slowly reaching out and taking the shoes from her mother, pleading with her



eyes for her mother not to buy them, knowing that no amount of shoe polish would ever be able to make them look new.

Now, shopping with Amanda, Martha headed to the finest shoe store in town. *Her* daughter would go to school wearing the best shoes that money could buy—with little consideration to cost.

Because part of the Lord's plan was to arrange for opposition in all things, thereby providing us with the opportunity to become strong through our struggles, we must keep in mind the benefits of allowing our children to grapple with challenges. How much to provide and how much to withhold are decisions best made prayerfully. Some things that seem unimportant to adults really matter to children. Seeking spiritual guidance will help parents make righteous decisions.

Before buying your child something, ask:

1. *Am I compensating for my own painful childhood memories through purchases made for my children?*
2. *Under what circumstances might withholding be as much an expression of love as giving in?*

Sometimes parents may need to openly explain to a child that one of the tasks of parenting is to help them become self-reliant—then provide them a way to work and save money. Explain to them that part of your responsibility as a parent is not only to teach them the principles of the gospel and how to become a loving person but also to instill in them a greater sense of self-reliance. In most situations this means not doing for children what they are capable of doing for themselves.

FEELINGS OF ENTITLEMENT

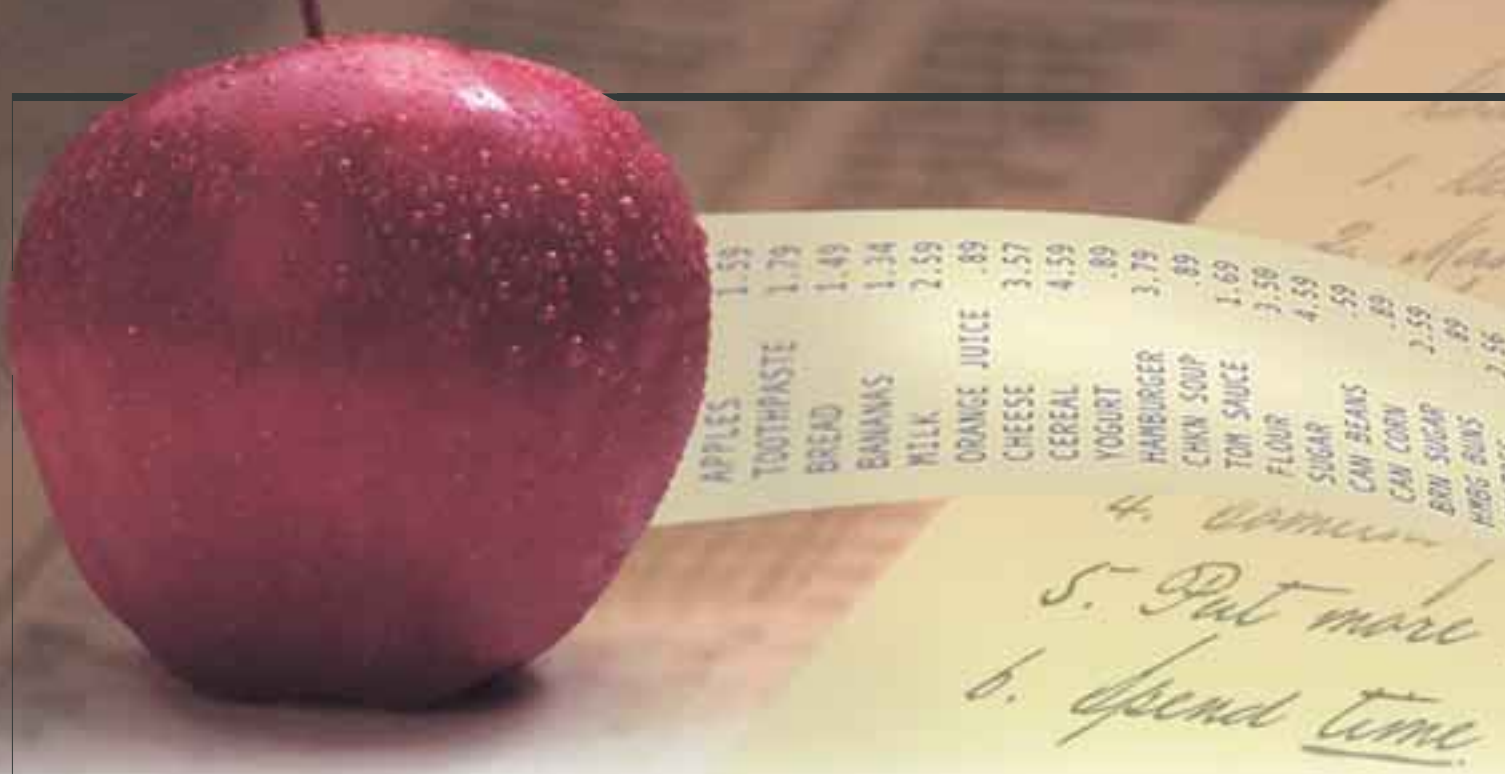
Another reason behind chronic indebtedness is a belief that we are somehow entitled to a higher standard



of living than may be warranted by our income. This belief may come from the fact that we have been raised with television advertisements that are aimed at convincing us that we deserve *everything* available to consumers: exotic vacations, fancy cars, designer clothes, estate-size homes, and eternal youth. It does not matter whether we are poor, middle class, or rich; if it exists, we deserve to have it. More often than not, credit cards are presented as the means by which dreams can come true. And so we indulge ourselves until the debt load becomes unmanageable and we find ourselves trapped in a materialistic world of debt.

During her lunch hour Paula quickened her pace through a crowded mall on her way back to work, eyeing each store display she passed. For her, noon-time window-shopping was more a ritual than a casual pastime. She liked nice clothes, and even as a child she had always had nice things. Near the mall exit, a particularly well-laid-out clothing display caught her eye. She noticed a blouse that would go nicely with a skirt she already had.

Suddenly Paula found herself engaged in an all-too-familiar mental exercise: rationalizing yet one more clothing purchase when her checking account was overdrawn. After all, why shouldn't she have it? She worked hard and needed a nice wardrobe for her job. She deserved it. She pulled out her credit cards and tried to recall which ones were at or over



limit and which ones would still allow a purchase. As she left the store with her new blouse, she pushed away the guilty feelings that added to her financial worries and concentrated instead on how nice the blouse would look with her skirt.

Each of us must decide what is *sufficient* for our needs and not allow our desires to be governed by what is advertised or available. We must personally decide what is enough car, house, or income rather than asking a bank officer how big a loan can we qualify for.

The next time you are tempted to buy something on impulse, ask:

1. Do I truly need this, or do I merely want it?
2. What is enough? What is sufficient?
3. What standard of living is appropriate for my current income?

Answering such questions can be difficult, for it often means coming face-to-face with our pride. While Jesus was here on earth, He chose to lead a humble life and recommended that those who wished to follow Him cast aside their desire for riches and seek first the kingdom of God.

FEELINGS OF INADEQUACY



Chronic indebtedness is also closely linked to the fulfillment of fantasies based on the belief that what people *have* is who they *are*. Tangible assets become a

symbolic reflection of how much people are worth, so those who have less feel inadequate. Those holding such beliefs think, "Right now, I may not be as good as so-and-so, but if I owned such-and-such, *then* I would be as good."

Before attending his 10-year school reunion, Ron bought a new Buick sedan in order to impress some of his high school buddies. While driving back to his hometown, he talked excitedly to his wife about how impressed the others were going to be when they saw him drive up in a new car. Unfortunately, the first friend he encountered was driving a new Lexus and the second drove up in a red Ferrari. Ron immediately felt swamped by feelings of inferiority. He never really enjoyed driving the Buick again.

This type of thinking can lead to conspicuous consumption in a futile attempt to "keep up with the Joneses." A pile of credit cards and a home equity line of credit can create a phantom income—an illusionary income that hopelessly mires one in debt.

The next time you find yourself comparing what you have to what others have, ask:

1. Does my Father in Heaven love me for who I am or for what I have?
2. How much of what I buy is intended to impress others?

A true sense of worth comes from our knowledge that we are beloved sons and daughters of Heavenly Father. In the eyes of God, do we believe that our soul is in any way less important than the soul of another? If we will turn to God for clarity about who we are, we will have less need to impress others with our wealth. Henry David Thoreau concluded, "Money is not required to buy one [necessity] of the soul" (*Walden and Other Writings of Henry David Thoreau*, ed. Brooks Atkinson [1950], 293). As we travel through



mortality, it might be well for us to keep in mind where our true wealth is found.

THE UNEXPECTED



Although the loss of a job or a divorce can often be listed under the category of the unexpected, in fact a great many things happen in life that are unforeseen. Failing to prepare for the unexpected often leads to chronic debt.

In the old days, many families set money aside in their savings accounts, thereby creating emergency funds to be drawn upon during difficult times or a financial crisis. However, today there is a tendency to rely on the unused portion of various credit lines during emergencies rather than on personal savings. There is a predisposition by some to view credit lines as money that belongs to them but has not yet been spent, rather than seeing credit lines for what they really are: someone else's money that will need to be repaid with interest.

Manuel and Marta anxiously looked at their mechanic, who was slowly shaking his head as he wiped the black grease off his hands with a small red cloth. "I'm afraid I've got some bad news," he declared. "Your transmission is going to have to be completely rebuilt."

Manuel cleared his throat and then asked, "How much do you think that will cost?"

"At least \$2,500," the mechanic replied nonchalantly. Manuel's eyes rolled toward the ceiling, and Marta gasped, "But we don't have that kind of money!"

Manuel shrugged his shoulders and looked helplessly at his wife. "I guess we'll just have to put it on the credit card."

To evaluate your readiness to cope with the unexpected, ask:

1. Do I have an adequate emergency fund (enough to cover three months' expenditures)?
2. Do I have a repair or maintenance fund to cover the annual costs of owning cars and appliances?
3. How long could I maintain my current standard of living if there were a sudden drop in my income?

Our annual cost of living includes all of our needs that have to be financed, both expected and unexpected. As a consequence, each month a certain amount of money needs to be put into a reserve account for unexpected problems.

As we take into consideration some of the underlying reasons that might be contributing to chronic debt, we can begin a process that, with faith and prayer, can help us make better choices. If we pray to know the truth and to see clearly our needs and how best to meet them, we can receive spiritual guidance in handling our temporal affairs. Then, when we come to know and acknowledge the truth about ourselves, our motives, and our unmet needs, we can free ourselves of unproductive behavior and move toward living within our incomes. □

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Gospel topics: debt, fiscal responsibility, self-discovery, truth

WHAT WE DID TO STRENGTHEN OUR MARRIAGE

*Members tell how they have used
gospel principles to solve problems in marriage
and build stronger bonds.*

"WAIT, THAT'S THE OLD WAY!"

My husband and I have been married for more than 48 years. In all that time, neither of us has done a deliberately unkind thing to the other. But this does not mean that we have always agreed. One of the best things we have done for our marriage was a plan we put into effect years ago to help us stop our wearying arguments.

First, we decided to fast together and pray specifically for help. Then we agreed that to keep misunderstandings from developing into quarrels, we would stop our discussion each time one occurred and begin again. If I said something and Bill got upset, I would say, "Wait, that's the old way." He would stop talking, I would rephrase what I had just said, and then he would say, "That's not what I thought you were saying. I thought you meant . . ." This approach gave each of us the opportunity to be sure the messages we were sending were being received the way they were intended.

It was work. Each time one of us said something and the other overreacted, we would stop and begin again. The first year we had to do this a lot, the next less, and over time even less. Now it almost never happens.

The important lesson for us was that eternal marriages don't just happen. They have to be built on hard work just like any other worthwhile achievement. But the work is well worth the effort.—**Joan B. Zizka, Sanford (Maine) Ward, Exeter New Hampshire Stake**

OUR TEMPLE DATES

A few years ago the president of the stake where we lived in Las Vegas challenged bishops, including my husband, to attend the temple more often. The counsel came at a time in our marriage when it was clear that we needed more time together as a couple. One Sunday during a Relief Society lesson on temple attendance, the



More caring
about a
spouse's happiness
strengthens the
relationship.

Spirit bore witness to me that my husband and I needed to follow that direction. My immediate reactions were "But what about my children?" and "How will that help? I'll be busy doing ordinance work, not talking to my husband." However, I continued to feel that prompting, and it calmed my fears. I resolved to try attending the temple with him that very week.

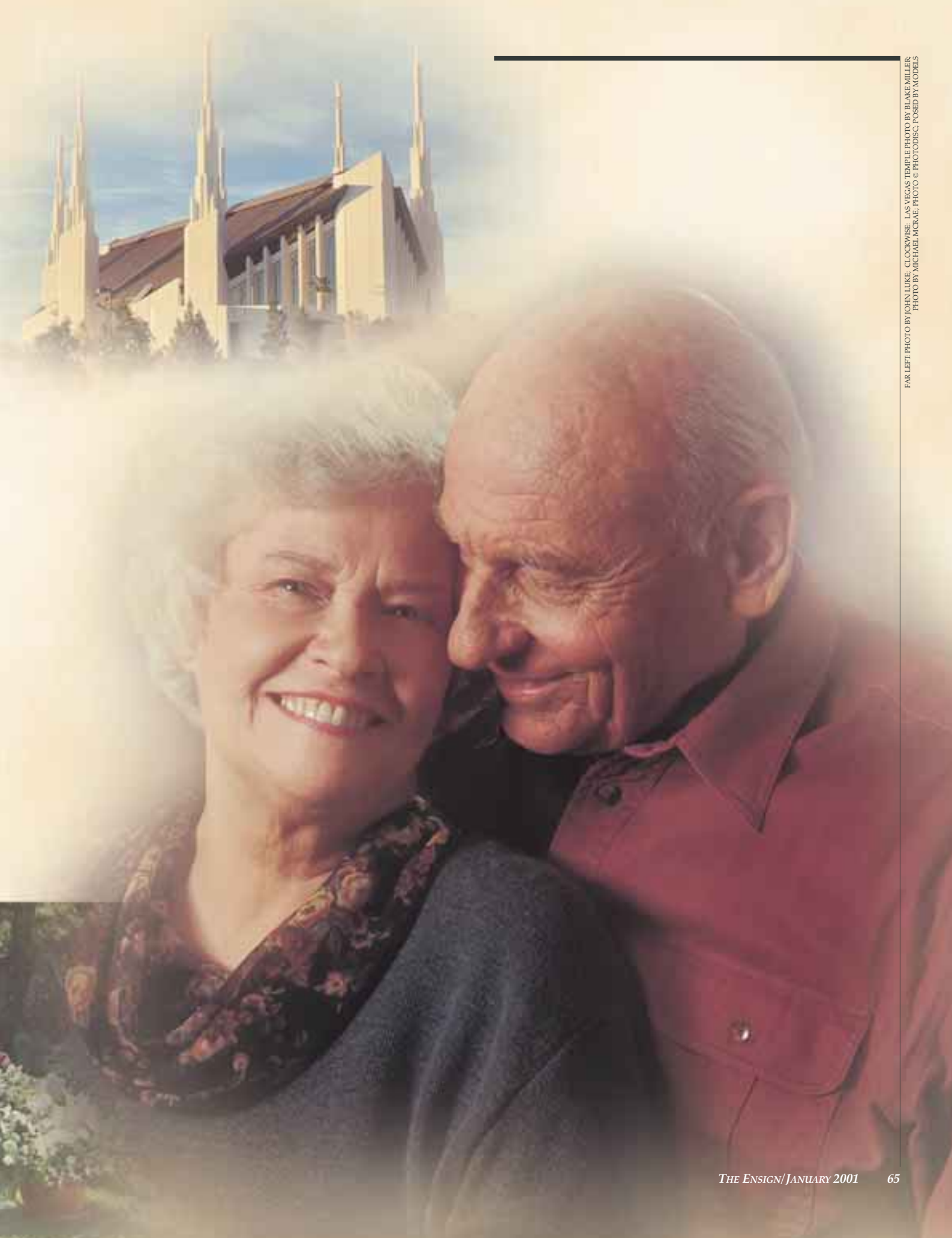
The best opportunity for us proved to be during the middle of a day when my husband's work took him near the temple. He could use his lunch hour for part of the time and make the rest up later. That worked well because our older children were in school and the younger two could play at a friend's house. As for one-on-one time with my husband, just being in the same room performing the same

sacred ordinances seemed to strengthen our marriage. Going to the temple led to many interesting gospel discussions, and soon we found that researching our family tree was a goal we wanted to pursue together.

One day in the temple I thought about Earth's first couple, Adam and Eve. When they left the Garden of Eden, they had only each other. I realized that if I had been cast out into the unknown, there was no one else on Earth I would rather build a life with than my husband. What peace and comfort I felt as I realized he could be eternally by my side.

That prompting to attend the temple with him more often has been a great blessing in our lives. Now I look forward to each of our temple visits.—**Laurie Denning, Jordan River Seventh Ward, South Jordan Utah River Stake**





FAR LEFT PHOTO BY JOHN LUKE; CLOCKWISE: LAS VEGAS TEMPLE PHOTO BY BLAKE MILLER
PHOTO BY MICHAEL MCKAE; PHOTO © PHOTODISC; POSED BY MODELS

LESS WORRYING, MORE CARING

Two pieces of instruction from the Sermon on the Mount, admonitions I am trying to apply in marriage, have helped renew my conviction of the power of Jesus Christ's teachings.

My frequent resolves to try harder and do more—to be a more loving husband, a more patient father, a better employee—did not succeed because I was trying to do too much. I realized I needed to put into practice the Savior's counsel found in Matthew 6:25–34, beginning with "Take ye no thought for your life." In my case, I felt this meant not to worry about the multitude of comparatively little things that were occupying most of my thoughts and draining my emotional strength. If my children acted up in church, I could do my best to help them but not overreact or fret about relatively minor problems. If my wife and I disagreed on something, I needed to focus on improving communication rather than worrying about who was right or wrong. It seemed unproductive also to worry so much about my shortcomings; instead, I needed to focus on helping others.

When I worried about petty things, I was usually thinking of *me* rather than others; I was comparing myself to them or worrying about what they were thinking of me. But when I focused more on caring about others—especially my wife—life was more relaxed and pleasant for me and everyone around me. More important, my marriage was enhanced because a significant number of disagreements between me and my wife simply did not happen anymore.

Quitting some of my useless worrying gave me more time to care about serving others as the Savior taught in the Golden Rule (see Matt. 7:12). I learned that when I truly tried to do for my wife what I would want her to do for me—always keep promises, think before speaking, counsel with my partner about decisions, and so forth—it was what she also wanted.

As I have practiced these principles from the Sermon on the Mount without reverting to old patterns of worry or selfishness, they have helped to strengthen our marriage.—**Duane L. Ostler, Snow Canyon Eighth Ward, St. George Utah Snow Canyon Stake**

BETWEEN THE TWO OF US

Early in our marriage, I made a commitment never to criticize my husband behind his back. I had noticed that as my friends got together, conversation easily slipped into husband bashing. It seems to be an almost natural tendency to avoid marital conflict directly while gaining a feeling of support through

the counterfeit relief of unloading emotional burdens on friends or family. But I had to ask myself, "How would I feel? Would I want my husband to complain about my weaknesses to others?" Hurt, betrayal, and mistrust are all consequences of verbal disloyalty.

Marital difficulties are best kept between the partners for resolution. The Lord himself counsels that we should first take a problem to the one with whom we have the difficulty; if the problem cannot be resolved at that level, others should be involved only according to a carefully specified pattern (see Matt. 18:15–16; D&C 42:88–92). If problems persist, counsel can be sought from priesthood leaders, who may recommend professional counseling if necessary.

Admittedly it takes courage to bring issues directly to our spouse. Our confidence is bolstered when we approach the situation with the humility born of a willingness to see our own imperfections, not just the flaws of our partner. Humility and courage together allow us to avoid the pitfall of verbal disloyalty and pave the way toward lasting resolutions.—**Kim Beecher, Auburn Fourth Ward, Auburn Washington Stake**



One couple found that humbly resolving marital difficulties between the two of them allowed both to grow.

A LIVING, GROWING THING

Little problems in marriage can grow to become destructive wedges if we do nothing to keep them in perspective. My husband and I have found this to be especially true when we have slacked off on having dates or spending one-on-one time together. The less time we spend together, the more those petty annoyances—little thorns in the garden of marriage—take on unrealistic importance. It is better to concentrate on the roses: the beauties around us in our day-to-day life.

Sharing time together, particularly on dates, enhances our ability to overcome those little annoyances. But with the demands of rearing a family, employment, Church callings, community service, and a multitude of other obligations, it is all too easy to let date time get crowded out if we don't stay vigilant in emphasizing its priority. We also find other ways to spend time together. After nine children and more than 20 years of marriage, my husband and I still sit side by side at church, in the car, and wherever else we go. We are still each other's favorite companions. But that didn't just happen. It requires thought, determination, and work to make time for each other on a regular basis.

An eternal marriage relationship, like faith, is a living, growing thing and needs to be nurtured. Our weekly date is a good base from which our marriage can grow.—**Valerie Wright, Bluffdale First Ward, Bluffdale Utah Stake**

GIVING BIRTH TO ONENESS

Even though it was our fifth child, the beginning of labor brought excitement with each pain. I was sure it would go quickly. But as hour after hour ticked by into the night, the continuing contractions chipped away at my excitement and optimism. Nurses found a bed where my husband could rest, but in a few hours the pains intensified and I needed him. Just as I sent a nurse to find him, he walked into my room, awake and already aware of my needs. That awareness continued as 14, 15, 16 hours crawled by. Unable to carry on a conversation, I would think a thought and my husband seemed to know how to respond. When I needed ice chips, he was there to spoon them into my mouth. When I ached, he was there to massage my shoulders. When I didn't know if I could go on, he was there to pray for me. And then, after 17 hours, when our daughter was delivered and placed in my arms, these words came to my mind a moment before my husband whispered the same ones into my ear: "We did it!"

Yes—we did it. So many of the needs that my husband met without my asking were physical, but I think I could not have endured the physical experience without the spiritual oneness we shared that night. This oneness is just one of the things my husband and I are learning as we share this life together. These words of the Savior clearly apply to married couples, along with everyone else: "If ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27).

Being one does not mean we lose our individuality. In fact, being one in this way enhances us as individuals.

It means that we share the same purposes, the same desires, the same goals, but we work to accomplish them using our individual talents and personalities. It means we share each other's



joys and pains. It means that before we think of our own needs, we think of our spouse's.

Certainly Heavenly Father wants married couples to achieve a oneness that is essential for eternal spiritual progression. And if as individuals we try to meet our spouse's needs consistently, our spouse will be more likely to try and meet our needs. It is contagious. Just as spiritual oneness helped bring the miracle of life to me and my husband on the day of our daughter's birth, oneness in our marriage will help bring the blessings of eternal lives.—**Denalee Call Chapman, Sitka Ward, Juneau Alaska Stake** □

Gospel topics: charity, forgiveness, love, marriage, service

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

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

1. Do I think more often about whether I am owed an apology or whether I owe one? Is it harder for me to say "I'm sorry" than it should be?
2. Do I worry too much about what I am getting out of my marriage and not how we are building for eternity?
3. What are some of the qualities I admire most about my spouse, and how can I help him or her build on them?



How the Book of Mormon Found Me

By Kwame Opare

Years ago I walked into a bookstore in Kumasi, Ghana. As I moved from shelf to shelf, pulling out one book after another, I spotted a book with a light blue cover, worn and faded. It carried the title *Book of Mormon*. I picked it up, dusted it off, and read a few sentences. I did not understand what I read, and I could not relate it to the Bible. But as I held the book in my hands, I had the impression it was scripture. However, as I had with other books I had picked up, I put it back on the shelf and continued looking at books.

A few minutes later, I found myself in the same area of the store, and I once again noticed the blue book. This time I looked at the table of contents and found a lot of strange and unfamiliar names. I thought, *If this is scripture, why do I not find this information in the Bible?* I tried to read a couple of verses but could not understand how it fit in. As before, I put it back on the shelf.

I looked at one book after another until, for the third time, I came upon that *Book of Mormon*. I opened it and found a section called Mosiah. *Is he in the Bible?* I wondered. My knowledge of scripture began and ended with the Bible. This blue book confused me. I felt as though a battle were raging inside me. I had never heard of the book before, but I felt I already knew it. A moment later I found myself paying for it.

For many years the *Book of Mormon* remained unread on my shelf. I tried to read it a few times, but I simply could not relate to it.



I had never heard of this book with the blue cover, but I felt I already knew it.

In time, I moved to Germany. When I arrived, I began looking for a place to worship. I attended a number of churches but never felt at home. Finally I began to pray and fast to know where to worship. A whole month passed before my answer came.

People from many different countries lived in my apartment building. Distinct among them was a gentleman and his wife who sometimes visited my friend. They were not rich, but they cared for us in many ways. Then one day they invited my friend to go to church with them, and he extended the invitation to me. I asked, "What church are we going to?"

He replied that we were going to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I told him that as long as they preached of Christ, I would go with him.

The day arrived, and we went to church. I looked around at the sea of strange faces. My first impression was of warmth and a sense of belonging. I was also happy to see young men administering the sacrament. I had never seen anything like that anywhere.

After sacrament meeting, those visiting for the first time were invited to attend the Gospel Principles class. The topic of discussion that day was the eternal nature of families. I was thrilled with all I heard. All too soon the class was over. I asked the teacher if he was going to continue with the same topic next week, and he said yes. I decided to return the following Sunday.

The next session was priesthood meeting. The lesson was about managing family finances.

What a church! I thought. The gospel and home management all in one!

After priesthood meeting, the couple who brought us to church, recognizing my interest, asked if I would like to hear lessons on

the restored gospel. "Sure," I said. And then, while I was basking in the spirit of the day's meetings, I suddenly remembered that shop where I bought an old, worn copy of the Book of Mormon. The incident in the shop, which I considered rather insignificant at the time and had long forgotten, now took on great meaning.

My lessons began and continued without a break. It was a joy to learn the gospel from these couple missionaries. They looked upon me not only as a brother but as a son. Lessons completed, I was baptized.

I have meditated often on these two connected but separate incidents. Why would anyone walk into a shop, find an old book with an unfamiliar title, read a couple of sentences he couldn't understand, and then buy the book? Does that make sense? Still, I believe that much of what reason alone cannot explain actually makes a lot of sense to the Lord. He prepares our path, and when we are ready to receive His word He leads us to the right people and into the right situations. Often, long before we start searching for God, He is looking for us. □

Kwame Opare is a member of the Munich Fourth Ward, Munich Germany Stake.

Gospel topics: Book of Mormon, conversion

"Please Help It Stop Bleeding"

By Janis Johnson Farrell

One morning in July 1985, I was looking forward to spending a quiet day at home with my three children, ages six, four, and one. Earlier my

husband and I had taken the family car to the service station for some repairs. I didn't mind being without a car for one day; it would give me a chance to catch up on some things that had gone undone with our family's hectic summer schedule.

The children played happily in the backyard while I kept an eye on them from the kitchen window. Suddenly I heard the sobs of my one-year-old, Michael. I turned off the kitchen faucet and ran outside. As I opened the back door, I could see blood all over Michael's chin and T-shirt.

My husband had been repairing our sprinkler system and had left a small bundle of PVC pipe near the patio. Michael had fallen on a jagged piece of pipe and scraped his chin, or at least that's what I thought.

I took him into the house and started to clean the wound. It was just a tiny cut, but it would not stop bleeding. Even when I put direct pressure on it, the bleeding still wouldn't stop.

I took Michael into the bedroom and offered a short prayer: "Please, Heavenly Father, help me know what to do. Please help it stop bleeding."

Shortly after I finished my prayer, I heard the doorbell ring. Taking Michael with me, I opened the door and saw my Relief Society president, Geri Robinson, standing there with her kitchen apron on.

"How are you doing, Janis?" she asked.

"Fine," I answered.

She looked at me with a puzzled expression. "A few moments ago I was in the middle of canning some fruit, and I felt a prompting to come over here immediately," she told me. She had turned off

her stove and done just that.

I assured her that everything was fine, not even considering that this woman was the answer to my prayer

Geri could see that Michael had been crying. I told her about the accident and Michael's cut.

"Where is your doctor's office?" she asked. I told her it was clear across town and that I didn't have a car but that I didn't feel Michael needed to go in for such a small cut.

Geri gently took my hand and told me we were going to see the doctor and reassure everything was all right. She quickly gathered my children and ushered us into her car

When the doctor examined Michael, he saw that the piece of pipe had made a cut almost three-fourths of an inch deep that would not have been detected without a professional exam.

"I'm impressed that you knew enough to bring your son in," he told me. "Most parents wouldn't have done that. Without prompt attention, the cut could have become infected and caused serious problems."

My heart overflowed, and so did my tears. I realized that my Heavenly Father had sent this dearsweet sister to me at a time when I needed help. I am sure some of Geri's fruit was ruined that day, but she helped me see that our Father in Heaven is ever mindful of us. How grateful I am that Geri listened to the Spirit of the Lord and followed His promptings! □

Janis Johnson Farrell is a member of the Anaheim 10th Ward, Anaheim California East Stake.

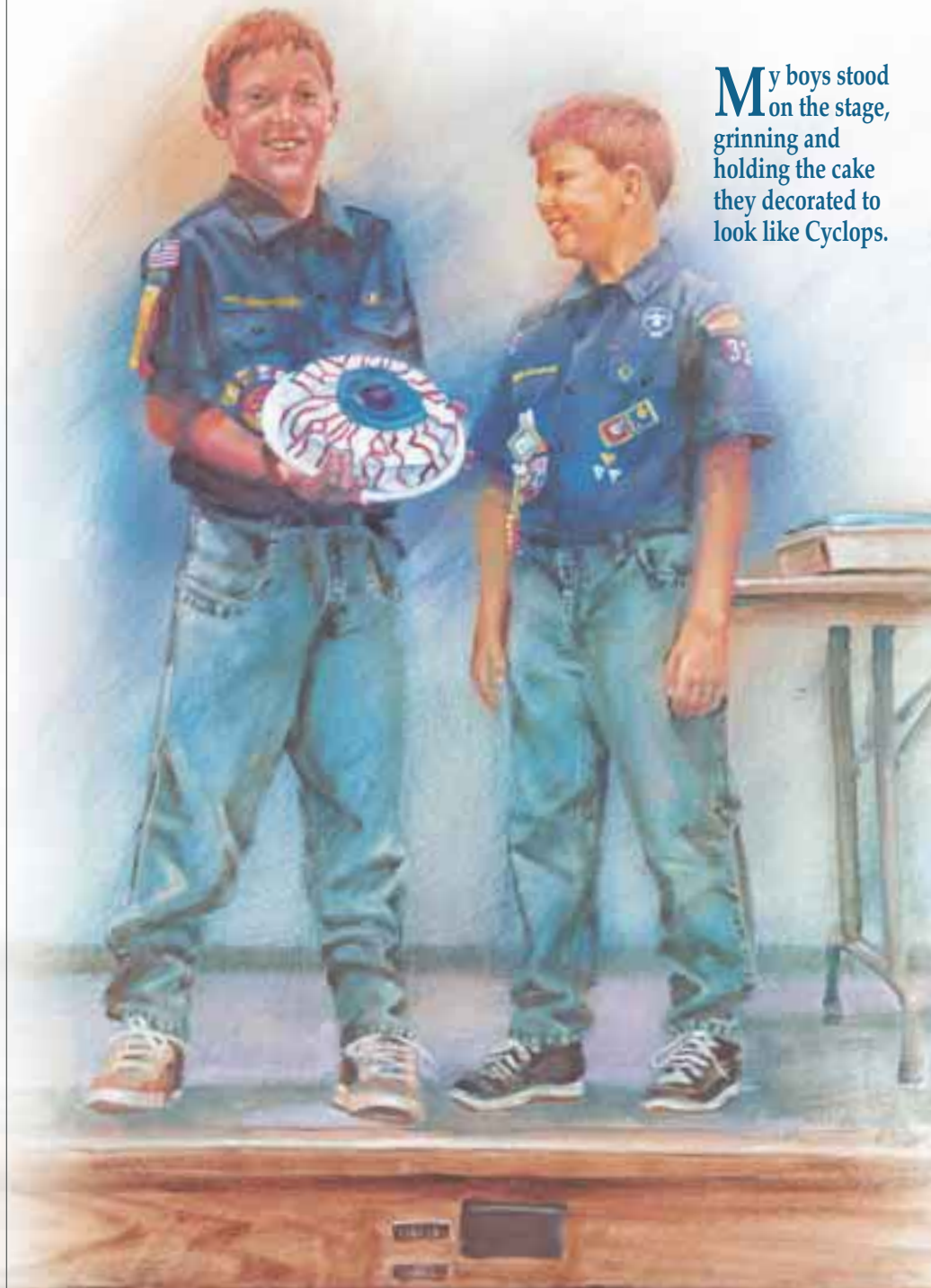
Gospel topics: promptings, service

Charity and the Cyclops Cake

By Nikki O. Nelson

A few weeks after my husband unexpectedly died, I came home from work tired and depressed. My sons met me at the door with two pieces of interesting information: we still had no water (it had stopped running in the middle of the night),

My boys stood on the stage, grinning and holding the cake they decorated to look like Cyclops.



and in about two hours there was a Cub Scout fathers and sons' cake contest and sale, and they needed a cake.

When I walked into the kitchen, I could see that dirty dishes had multiplied alarmingly. There was hardly any space for mixing a cake, and we still needed to solve our water problem!

I located a simple cake recipe and recruited a son, against his will, to give his younger brothers directions. Then I changed clothes, rummaged around in the barn for a pipe wrench, and crawled down into the well. I had watched my husband fix the pump several times and had no doubt that in a few minutes I could have it running.

The connections looked OK. I rattled the switch box to get the earwigs out of it and tapped it with the wrench. Nothing. I kicked the pipe. Nothing. I mashed my finger while trying to unscrew the plug to prime it. It wouldn't budge. Nothing worked.

I must have spent an hour down the well trying everything I could think of. I despaired. *What on earth am I doing down in this hole hammering on a stupid pump when I should be in a nice, clean kitchen being a mother? Why do my children have to go through life and Cub Scout cake sales without a father? Is this fair?*

Unable to fix the water problem, I gave up and went to the meeting—late. I sat on a chair in the back of the hall, and the boys took their sad little cake to the table at the front. There were cakes that looked like Cub Scout caps, cakes with trees and birds, cakes with patriotic flags. Then there was our cake. My sons had decorated it to look like Cyclops, with one giant eyeball made of purple and blue frosting in the middle. They had added lots of wiggly red lines to make the eyeball look bloodshot.

I sat there in the dark feeling sorry for myself. When I could keep back the tears of frustration and self-pity no longer, I slipped out and went into the rest room.

A Relief Society sister in the group saw me go. She followed me, and before long I had poured out the entire story. She put her arm around me and gave me a hug and then suggested the names of a couple of reliable plumbers. Plumbers? What a novel idea! It was revolutionary to me. When the water doesn't work on a farm, you tell your husband, and he tinkers around the pump for a little while, and voila—everything is OK. It had never crossed my mind to call a plumber! I realized that maybe it would be all right to make decisions that were different from how my husband would have done things. Maybe things would look up after all.

At the end of the evening, the cake sale began. My boys stood on the stage, grinning and holding the grotesque eyeball cake. A sweet little grandmother ended up paying a respectable price for it. As she went up on stage to get the cake, she said she couldn't tell exactly what it was supposed to be, but she really liked the colors. My boys, thank goodness, just smiled and kept their mouths shut.

Those two wonderful women knew about charity. In a simple way, they each saw a need and then spontaneously went out of their way to fill it. They would probably say it was just a small thing; I doubt they even remember the incident. But it was not a small thing to me.

Jesus Christ showed us our pattern. He taught us charity. He was sensitive to the needs of those He loved, and He loved them all. He teaches us likewise to be sensitive to each other, to love and comfort and lift each

other. I think that's part of the reason we are here.

That day, I learned that when it comes to practicing charity, sometimes the little things can make a big difference. □

Nikki O. Nelson is serving in the Australia Brisbane Mission.

Gospel topics: charity, service

After 20 Years, Indifferent No More

By Félix López Marchán

When my son joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the early 1970s, I did not oppose him, but neither was I much interested in hearing about his new church. Without pressuring me, my son tried to share the gospel message. He gave me books, pamphlets, and other material that I left unread on my bookshelf. I had been reading the Bible for many years and supposed that was sufficient religion in my life.

In 1988 my wife died, and for years afterward I felt lonely and depressed. One day in February 1993, I heard a voice tell me to join the Mormon Church. At that time I would not have understood the message if I had been given the true name of the Church. I was surprised by the voice; I was alone and didn't know where it had come from. When the message was repeated, I was extremely impressed.

As was my custom at that time of day, I went out to jog. That particular day I happened to meet two Latter-day Saint missionaries. They gave me a pamphlet, and when I read it I remembered what had happened earlier. I felt that

the two experiences and their timing were not coincidental.

A little while later, Elders Shaun Yusko and Tryon Clark knocked on my door. They were surprised when I welcomed them into my home and told them what had happened. A warm spirit filled the room, and I was filled with the desire to be baptized.

I went to my son's house to tell him I wanted to join the Church. He looked at me with love and smiled calmly. He said he was not surprised; his patriarchal blessing had assured him I would eventually be converted. He baptized me, and before we stepped out of the baptismal font, we embraced, overcome with emotion. I was 76 years old. Twenty years of indifference were over.

It so happened that I lived within the boundaries of a newly organized branch in Venezuela, and four months after my baptism I was called to serve as branch president. With little experience I was able to fulfill the calling by trusting in the Lord's help, studying the standard works and the Church manuals, and receiving counsel from my son, who was then serving as a bishop. I was also blessed by the dedication of one of the sisters in the branch who became my wife.

My life has changed completely. I feel immensely happy working in the branch. I love the members and feel their support and the support of my wonderful family. I only wish I hadn't been so indifferent when the gospel first entered my life. I'll be eternally grateful I was given another chance. □

Félix López Marchán is a member of the Charallave Branch, Ocumare del Tuy Venezuela District.

Gospel topics: conversion, indifference, patience

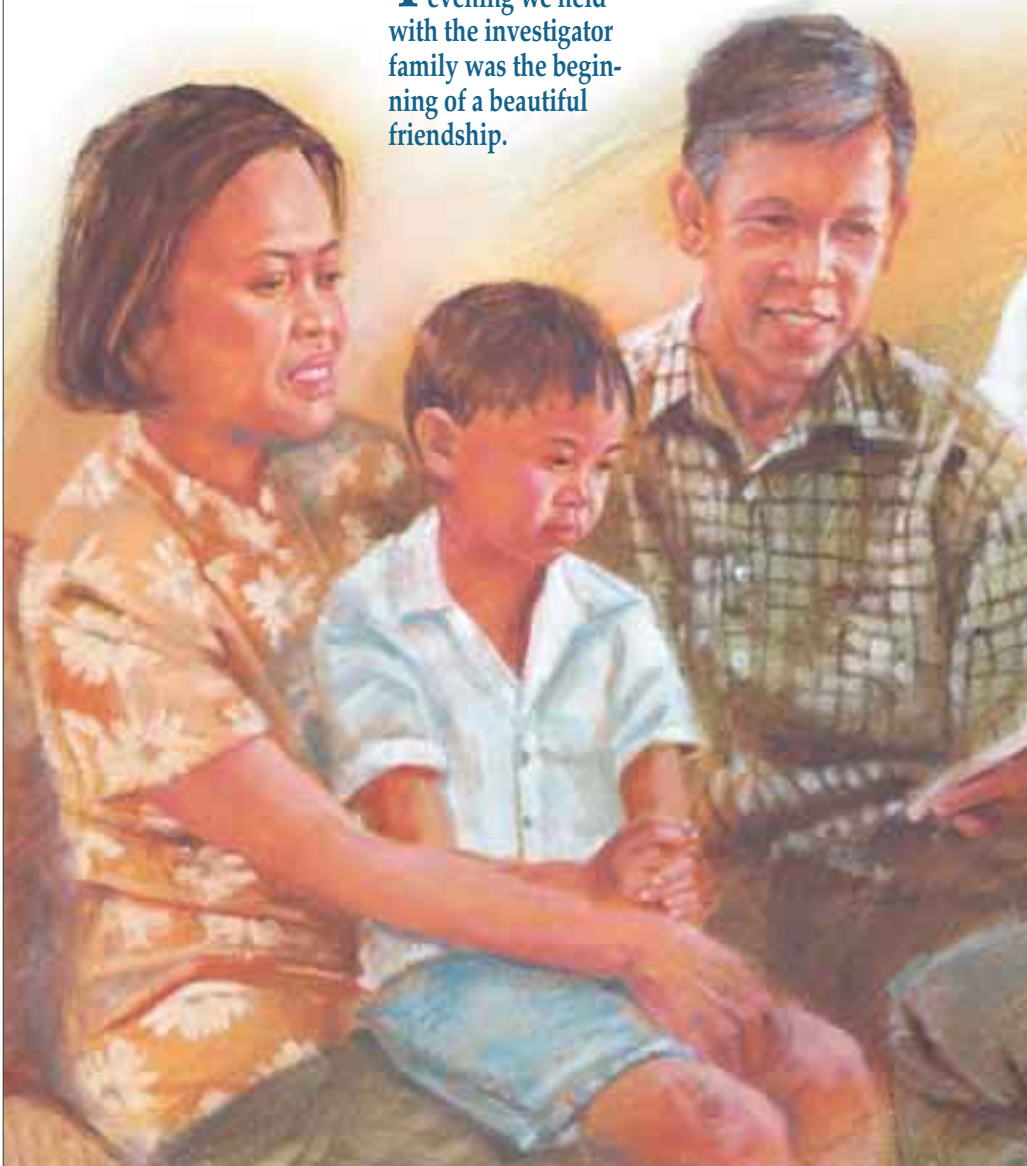
I Felt Comfort— but Why?

By Alan L. Olsen

In 1980 I was a missionary serving in the Philippines Cebu Mission when I was transferred to a city called Ormoc. This district had normally shown steady

growth, but for several months there had been very few baptisms. I arrived in Ormoc on 28 October and met my new companion, Elder Alexander. The first few weeks were extremely slow for us. We had few teaching appointments and almost no referrals. In spite of working long hours and praying to find people to teach, we met with little success. I remember praying for guidance and receiving confirmation that the Lord was

The family home evening we held with the investigator family was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.



preparing people for us to teach.

On 15 November Elder Alexander and I were tracting in the Barrio Isla Verde, a community on a small island in the Ormoc River. To get there we had to cross the shallow river some 75 feet (23 m) on stepping stones, which proved to be a feat in itself. However, the local residents traveled the path with ease.

While there, we met Petronilo and Andrea Ygonia and their

grandson Allan Sueto Sungahid. They accepted our invitation to hold a family home evening in their home. That evening was the beginning of a beautiful friendship. After playing some fun games, we introduced a gospel message and bore our testimonies.

Our visits continued with this family for the next two weeks. It was exciting to watch as their countenances began to shine. By the end of November all three had committed to be baptized the following month.

I will never forget the teaching experience we had in the Ygonias' home on 2 December. President Loa, the ward mission leader, came with us to a neighborhood meeting at the Ygonias'. More than 30 neighbors had accepted the Ygonias' invitation to come and listen to the first discussion. As we taught and bore testimony, the Holy Ghost filled the room and became so strong that I believe everyone present was touched.

We explained that the warm, peaceful feeling each person was experiencing was the presence of the Holy Ghost. Prompted by the Spirit, we invited each person in that room to continue investigating the Church and commit to baptism. All 30 neighbors accepted the invitation.

Brother and Sister Ygonia, their grandson, and seven others were baptized in December. The work in Ormoc had begun to prosper once again, due in large part to the faith of this good family. Shortly thereafter I was transferred from Ormoc. Although I had spent only six weeks there, these weeks were some of the best of my life. Never had I worked harder for such a worthy cause. Never had I felt closer to the Lord. During the six weeks I served there, the Lord had

allowed us to teach and baptize 9 souls, and another 30 individuals were preparing for baptism.

Eleven years later, in November 1991, I was sitting in my office at work and suddenly felt the Comforter's influence. It was a strong feeling of peace and love. The impression came to me that someone had died, but I could not think of who it might be. I called my wife, Susan, at home and asked if everything was all right. She reassured me, but I still felt the same way.

That evening, I felt impressed to pick up one of my journals. I turned to the pages where I had recorded my missionary experiences in Ormoc. As I read, the Spirit grew stronger and tears came into my eyes. I thought of the wonderful people I had seen embrace the gospel there. Could it be that these strong feelings of comfort were related to my Ormoc experience?

Later that month I read of a devastating typhoon that had hit Ormoc. Listed in the 30 November edition of the *Church News* were the names of 22 members who had died in the flooding. Among the dead were Brother and Sister Ygonia and their grandson Allan. I also saw the names of other people I had known while serving in Ormoc. Again the familiar warmth and peace of the Comforter entered my heart, and I understood why I had felt His influence earlier.

This tragic event had taken the mortal lives of many beautiful families. While I grieved their deaths, I knew they had returned to Heavenly Father's presence, where they continue in the work they began here on earth. □

Alan L. Olsen is a member of the Centerville Ward, Fremont California Stake.

Gospel topics: death, Holy Ghost, love, missionary work



Putting on the Whole Armor of God

It is time to give ourselves to the Master and allow Him to lead us into fruitful fields where we can enrich a world filled with darkness and misery," said Sister Mary Ellen Smoot, Relief Society general president. "Each of us, no matter who we are, no matter where we serve, must arise and make the most of each opportunity that comes. We must follow the counsel given by the Lord and His servants and make our homes houses of prayer and havens of security and safety. We can and must deepen our faith by increasing our obedience and sacrifice" ("Rejoice, Daughters of Zion," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 94).

Sometimes it may seem difficult to rise above the world to that level of righteousness. But as we strive to "take unto [ourselves] the whole armour of God," we will "be able to withstand in the evil day" (Eph. 6:13).

HOW TO PUT ON THE ARMOR OF GOD

President N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982), First Counselor in the First Presidency, observed that "those who are clothed in such armor, which means keeping *all* the commandments of God, are able to withstand the adversary."

He continued: "Are we studying the scriptures so that we can increase our knowledge and faith and testimony regarding the gospel? . . . Are we honest and truthful in our dealings? Do we keep the Sabbath day holy? Do we observe the Word of Wisdom? Do we pay an honest tithing? . . . Are we virtuous and clean and pure in heart and mind and deed?"

"Do we fight against the evils around us . . . ? Do we have the courage to stand up for our convictions? Can we truly say we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ? Do we live peaceably with our neighbors and avoid gossip and backbiting and spreading

One sister found daily spiritual renewal by praying and reading scriptures before the rest of the family woke up.

unfounded rumors? Do we truly love our neighbors as ourselves?

"If we can answer yes to these questions, then we will have on the whole armor of God, which will protect us from harm and preserve us from our enemies" ("Put on the Whole Armor of God," *Ensign*, May 1979, 44, 46).

DAILY SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Lucile Johnson of the Timp-anogos Park First Ward, Orem Utah North Stake, now in her 80s, learned early in life to don her spiritual "armor" at the beginning of each day. She remembers "arising early in the morning, before my husband and children were

up. I found that kneeling in the stillness of my living room, I could begin pleading with our Father for my needs for that day. This brought me great peace, and I learned that He was my helper and protector. Then I would open my scriptures and partake of their inspiration and guidance. Each morning, before I began whatever I had to do—alone, with little children or teenagers, or with my husband in the military and off to war—I knew I would be equal to it.

"That is why I believe in taking the time in the quiet of the early morning hours to study and pray. You will begin your day with a renewing of your spirit. Then you will be truly ready for whatever might come that day." □

Gospel topics: keeping the commandments, prayer, scripture study



Involving Children in Family History

Our family was involved in family history research before we became members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but our interest intensified after our baptisms. Here are some of the ways my husband, Tom, and I encouraged our family to participate in family history:

- We often made family outings to distant cemeteries in search of our ancestors. When our children were too little to read but knew the alphabet, we printed family surnames onto index cards in large capital letters. We had the children walk between two rows of headstones and call out if they found a name that matched the name on their card. When they found a match, Tom and I hurried to record relevant information.

As the children learned to read, they

were able to record information on their own. Before leaving the cemetery, we double-checked each other's entries.

- For a family home evening activity, we gathered envelopes, stamps, writing paper, and work sheets. After a prayer, we each chose a family name to research. We searched books of remembrance and wrote letters to pursue certain information. Often clues were found in past correspondence. Even now I find copies of the children's letters, the correspondence they received, and notes they wrote, and I marvel at their wisdom.

- Now that my children are grown, I send family file cards to

my grandchildren to do baptisms for our ancestors. I also include whatever bits of information I have found about each individual. For example, William Samuel Baker had a jewelry store in Findley Lake, New York, and loved to go trout fishing. John W. Barden was the sextant of a cemetery and often put notices in the Sherman, New York, newspaper scolding the "errant lads who race their steeds through the cemetery at midnight." Such information makes these ancestors come alive for my grandchildren. It can also form a basis for good family home evening lessons.

As we participate in family history, we pray for these men and women and learn how they fit into the family. The children receive a testimony of family history when they do their part in the saving ordinances. We are able to witness hearts of the children being turned to their fathers (see Mal.

4:6) and to enjoy the feelings of unity and closeness that result.—**Shirley Bockēti, Cory Branch, Jamestown New York Stak**





PHOTO BY TERRY WEINBERG

"It's been gratifying to see how quickly the Church can move into action to help others in need," said a stake president in Peoria, Arizona, after hundreds of local members united to give service.

Members Serve Communities Worldwide

Following the counsel of Church leaders to be good neighbors, Latter-day Saints throughout the world are serving their communities.

CENTRAL ARIZONA

Members in central Arizona gave unexpected community service in October. After a volunteer group was not able to participate in a planned neighborhood cleanup project in Peoria, Arizona, a city official turned to the Peoria and Peoria North stakes for help. Some 600 Latter-day Saints turned out for the 21 October project, in which they worked on 47 lots in a mobile home park.

City officials were impressed that Church units could muster up 600 people so quickly, said President Lloyd Price of the Peoria North stake. Members trimmed dozens of trees and bushes and planted

new foliage, repaired roofs and painted homes, spread new gravel on lots, and removed 350 tons of debris.

As members were completing their work, rain began to fall. By the following day, two inches had fallen in many parts of Arizona, causing extensive flooding in Wendon, a town of 3,000 that is part of the Peoria North stake. The flooding continued for weeks.

After the flooding abated, men of the two Peoria stakes were back at it again, this time using heavy equipment to remove mud, silt, and debris. They were joined by men of other stakes in the region. The Church meetinghouse in Wendon became the distribution point for much of the community aid. Truckloads of food from the bishops' storehouse were delivered to the meetinghouse and distributed to the community within

days of the flooding.

"It's been gratifying to see how quickly the Church can move into action to help others in need," President Price said.

PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL

After heavy October flooding killed six people and destroyed or damaged hundreds of homes in Porto Alegre, Brazil, local Latter-day Saints assisted those

displaced by the floods. Missionaries and members teamed up with others in the community to repair damaged homes and to organize food boxes for distribution. Building materials and food were purchased with Church humanitarian funds. Local fast-offering funds were used to assist some LDS families who lost their homes. No damage was reported to the Porto Alegre Brazil Temple, which was nearing dedication.

SPRINGVALE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

Missionaries of the Australia Melbourne Mission recently worked with community members to help spruce up a shopping district in Springvale, Victoria. The group painted benches, power boxes, and graffiti-covered walls; filled two large bins with garbage; planted 30 trees; and washed a pedestrian underpass.

"The project was an enormous success," said Tim Holding, the local member of parliament. Many passers-by stopped to thank the missionaries. □



PHOTO BY PAM HODSON

Some of the 85 missionaries of the Australia Melbourne Mission who joined community members to spruce up a district in Victoria, Australia.



Missionaries in Nauvoo, including those involved in temple construction, are now under the ecclesiastical leadership of one mission president.

Illinois Nauvoo Mission Created

The Illinois Nauvoo Mission, the Church's 334th, was created on 1 November 2000. The new mission unifies missionaries involved in a variety of activities at or near the historic location. Nauvoo had been included in the Illinois Peoria Mission and will now function as a mission within a mission, much like the Utah Salt Lake City Temple Square Mission.

Various groups of missionaries are currently at work in the Nauvoo area, including temple construction missionaries, building restoration missionaries,

Nauvoo Visitors' Center and Carthage Jail Visitors' Center missionaries, and guides at other Nauvoo locations. The creation of the new mission brings these groups of missionaries under the ecclesiastical leadership of one mission president.

"This is a unique situation," said Richard K. Sager, newly called president of the Nauvoo mission, who had been serving as director of the Nauvoo Visitors' Center. "There aren't many places in the world where there is such a concentration of 200 or more missionaries in one place." □

New On-line Church Resources

Several curriculum items have recently been added to the Gospel Library Archive listings on the official Church Web site at www.lds.org.

They include "Teachings for Our Time, 2001," the material to be used in priesthood and Relief Society lessons on the fourth Sunday of each

month; Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Sunday School manuals and study guides for 2001; resource guides for Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women lessons; and Primary

manuals 1 through 7.

Church magazines, which were previously available on the Internet three months after publication, are now available on-line shortly after publication. □

Exhibits Open at Church Museum

Three new exhibits at the Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City employ a variety of modern techniques to present Church themes.

"The Living Christ" document, issued in 2000 by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, provided the title and inspiration for a new exhibit that features artistic portrayals of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

"Jesus Christ is the center of our religion and the focus of our faith," says curator Richard G. Oman. "The exhibit communicates this through visual and symbolic means." Brother Oman said that rather than exhibiting a chronological narrative of the life of Christ, the curators chose more than 30 works of art that "demonstrate how His life affected those who lived at that time and how His teachings and Atonement affect us today."

A photographic exhibit titled "In the Footsteps of Joseph Smith: Photographs of Early Church Historic Sites, 1805-1846" features historic glass-plate photographs and modern photographs

side-by-side. The glass-plate photographs were made in 1907-8 by George Edward Anderson as he traveled to buildings and sites of early Latter-day Saint history. These historic photographs are displayed alongside modern photographs of the same locations, taken by Scot Facer Proctor in 1990.

In the "Valiant Pioneer Children" interactive exhibit, visitors ages 2 to 12 and their adult companions can "learn about the values that motivated Latter-day Saint emigrants from the



Pulling a handcart is just one activity youngsters and adults can try at the "Valiant Pioneer Children" exhibit.

British Isles as they sailed the Atlantic and trekked across America in the 19th century," says Glen M. Leonard, museum director. Children can blow a tiny ship across the "ocean," pull a handcart, choose

what to take and what to leave behind as they load miniature wagons, build a replica keystone arch of the Salt Lake Temple, and do many other activities. Curator Marj Conder says that as children interact

with the exhibit, they are introduced to values such as courage, gratitude, helpfulness, work, responsibility, learning, loving, and remembering.

The new exhibits will remain on display through

fall 2001. Admission is free. The museum is open from 9:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. on weekdays and from 10:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. on most weekends. For more information, call 801-240-3310. □



In addition to literacy, gospel literacy, or the ability to gain gospel knowledge through searching the scriptures, is now being emphasized.

Church Literacy Program Increases its Reach

By Krista Miner

If you've ever thought illiteracy is not a serious problem in today's modern world, think again. The Office of Technology Assessment, an analytical arm of the U.S. Congress, recently found that at least 35 million adults in the U.S. alone have difficulty with common literacy tasks. In some countries, up to 75 percent of the population is illiterate.

"There is . . . a world in which they are literally blinded from much of that which goes on about them. Now there is to be provided

a means to open the doors of communication and let in the light of understanding," said President Gordon B. Hinckley, speaking of the Church literacy program that was introduced in 1991 (see *Ensign*, Mar. 1992, 6).

Since that time, the Relief Society, working with the Church Educational System, has made great strides in teaching thousands of members to read.

Today, besides focusing on literacy, Relief Society leaders are also emphasizing the importance of teaching *gospel* literacy, meaning the ability to gain gospel

knowledge through prayer, searching the scriptures, and writing down what is learned.

"It is thrilling for us because those who were illiterate are now learning the gospel as well as literacy," said general Relief Society president Mary Ellen Smoot.

Other new approaches are also going forward. Ward literacy specialists are now encouraged to teach people in family groups in the home where possible rather than just as individuals. Besides strengthening families, this approach encourages children, who learn more quickly, to help their parents and relatives learn.

In a third new approach, those who are illiterate are taught not only how to read but also how to teach others to read. "No longer do we face the literacy program with the idea to simply teach the illiterate to read. It is more than that," says Sister Smoot. "We are asking instead, 'Who would like to instruct how to *teach* literacy?' If one has an opportunity to teach, they receive a greater desire to learn."

The Mesa Arizona Southern Estates Ward is experiencing success using this approach. The ward literacy specialists teach members how to read, then train these members to use the

literacy materials to teach their families and others. The ripple effect has been powerful. Ward member Shellie Gibson tells of a 15-year-old boy who began attending literacy classes only because of his parents' insistence, but he is now able to read and is teaching others to do the same.

"He loves the fact that now he can understand and really read the scriptures," says Sister Gibson. "He now has a hope he didn't have before. It is true: teaching someone to read can change their life forever."

Relief Society leaders may obtain the Church's literacy manuals, teaching charts, and training video free of charge through their local CES representatives. □

Krista Miner is a member of the BYU 92nd Ward, BYU 9th Stake.

Appointments

James O. Mason, who served as a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy from April 1994 to October 2000, has been called as president of the Bountiful Utah Temple. His wife, Marie Smith Mason, has been called as temple matron. President and Sister Mason are members of the Farmington 10th Ward, Farmington Utah North Stake. □



PHOTO © SUPERSTOCK

Members of the Victoria stake are flourishing as they reach out to others in their picturesque city, the capital of British Columbia, Canada.

Thriving in Victoria, British Columbia

Although the first independent branch on Vancouver Island wasn't established until 1946, two stakes are now burgeoning on this island off the southwest coast of British Columbia, Canada. One of them is the Victoria British Columbia Stake. Latter-day Saint immigrants from around the world, attracted to the area's beauty, mild climate, and recreation and employment opportunities, have contributed to the increase. Church



converts also have fueled the growth.

"Many members in the stake are first- or second-generation converts and

feel great appreciation for the impact of the gospel in their lives," says stake president Jackson Ellis. "They have helped establish the kingdom through their own faith and works."

Yet, whether they are converts, immigrants, or lifelong local members, Latter-day Saints in Victoria are flourishing as they live the gospel and share its blessings in various ways.

Eileen Bevan, a convert from South Africa, organizes sisters in the Victoria First Ward in making blankets, quilts, clothing, and leper bandages for the needy. The sisters work together on their humanitarian projects once a week. Some continue the projects on their own. Through word of mouth and the local media, the sisters have involved members of other faiths in the effort.

Member and nonmember visits to the Victoria Stake Family History Center total more than 1,000 per month, thanks in part to outreach efforts organized by Barry Stewart, director of the center. A Church member recently spoke on a local talk show about genealogy and the Family History Center. That event was followed by a daylong family history seminar that many members and nonmembers attended. After the seminar, "attendance at the center doubled," said Brother Stewart. "The event was a huge success, and another is in the works."

Another important outreach effort is made by members to new

converts and move-ins to help them feel part of the stake family. Melissa Orrego, a 15-year-old who recently moved to Victoria from Australia, says: "Even though the people and their customs were different, I felt welcome right away. It

VICTORIA B.C. STAKE

Organized: 1975

Members: 1,800

Units: 5 wards, 2 branches

Full-time missionaries from stake: 13

Temple district: Seattle Washington Temple

was like I had known them for a long time."

As members of the Victoria stake continue to enthusiastically reach out to strengthen each other and to share the gospel with those around them, there's no doubt that the Church here will flourish.—**Carey Barnard, Victoria First Ward, Victoria British Columbia Stake** □



PHOTOGRAPHY BY CAREY BARNARD, EXCEPT AS NOTED

Eileen Bevan, right, has organized members and nonmembers in a weekly humanitarian effort that has produced hundreds of quilts and blankets.



"I felt welcome right away," says Melissa Orrego, center, of her recent move to Victoria, where she was surrounded by Church friends.

Call for Articles

Members are invited to submit personal accounts on the impact of gospel principles in overcoming spiritual, physical, emotional, mental, or social challenges. Accounts may reflect one experience or several.

Articles might focus on (1) application of a gospel principle one has not been able to live before—such as the law of tithing or forgiveness; (2) experiences with overcoming a destructive behavior or lifestyle; (3) parental experiences dealing with a straying child; (4) experiences in overcoming trials of being a single parent; (5) conversion stories; (6) coming back into the

gospel; (7) accounts on one's labors to "come unto Christ."

Send your manuscript by 10 March to *Ensign* Editorial, 24th Floor, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3224. At the top of your submission, write "Application of Gospel Principles," along with your name, address, telephone number, ward, and stake. You can also submit articles by

e-mail (type "Application of Gospel Principles" on the subject line) to cur-editorial-ensign@ldschurch.org. While we are not able to acknowledge receipt of individual manuscripts, authors whose stories are selected for publication will be notified. If you want your manuscript returned, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and allow up to a year.

Making the Most of This Issue

J A N U A R Y 2 0 0 1

with oneself comes first. See "Debt Doesn't Have to Be Forever," p. 59.

Family Home Evening Ideas

- Most stories from Latter-day Saint Voices can be used for family home evenings. If you want to teach your family about spiritual promptings, for example, start a discussion by reading "Please Help It Stop Bleeding," p. 69.

- The small acts of kindness we do may be inspired actions that will make a

big difference in someone else's life. Read and discuss "Charity and the Cyclops Cake," p. 70.

- Do your children believe family history research is only for Mom and Dad? See how one couple involved the whole family, p. 75.

Background for This Year's Gospel Doctrine Study

- What work of scripture gives us direct, modern-day instruction from the Lord as well as divine testimony of the origins of other scriptures? See pp. 18–29.
- The golden plates were worth a fortune—in gold! And wicked people were willing to go to great lengths to steal the precious metal.

To learn more about the Prophet Joseph Smith's struggle to protect the plates, read "Take Heed Continually," p. 37.

- Can one couple make a difference? Read about the inspiring support the parents of the Prophet Joseph Smith gave him throughout his ministry, p. 52.



Marriage Tips

Do you want to build an even stronger marriage? Members tell of some very simple but effective ways that they did it. See p. 64.

Home Teachers and Visiting Teachers

Find the monthly messages on pp. 2 and 74.

GOSPEL TOPICS

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Abortion, 12 | Joseph Smith, 30, 37 |
| Agency, 12 | Keeping the commandments, 74 |
| Bible, 24 | Love, 64, 72 |
| Book of Mormon, 18, 37, 68 | Marriage, 64 |
| Charity, 64, 70 | Missionary work, 72 |
| Choice, 12 | Moral purity, 2 |
| Church history, 30 | Mortality, 12 |
| Conversion, 68, 71 | Obedience, 52 |
| Death, 72 | Parenthood, 52 |
| Debt, 59 | Patience, 71 |
| Diversity, 12 | Prayer, 2, 74 |
| Doctrine and Covenants, 18, 24 | Promptings, 69 |
| Eternal perspective, 12 | Prophecy, 30 |
| Faith, 52 | Prophets, 24 |
| Faithfulness, 37 | Restoration, 30 |
| Family, 12 | Revelation, 24 |
| Forgiveness, 64 | Sacrifice, 52 |
| Goals, 12 | Scripture study, 74 |
| Gratitude, 2 | Self-discovery, 59 |
| Holy Ghost, 72 | Service, 64, 69, 70 |
| Humility, 2 | Testimony, 18 |
| Indifference, 71 | Tolerance, 12 |
| Integrity, 2 | Truth, 59 |
| Jesus Christ, 24 | Unity, 12 |
| | Work, 2 |
| | Youth, 2 |

To the Youth of the World

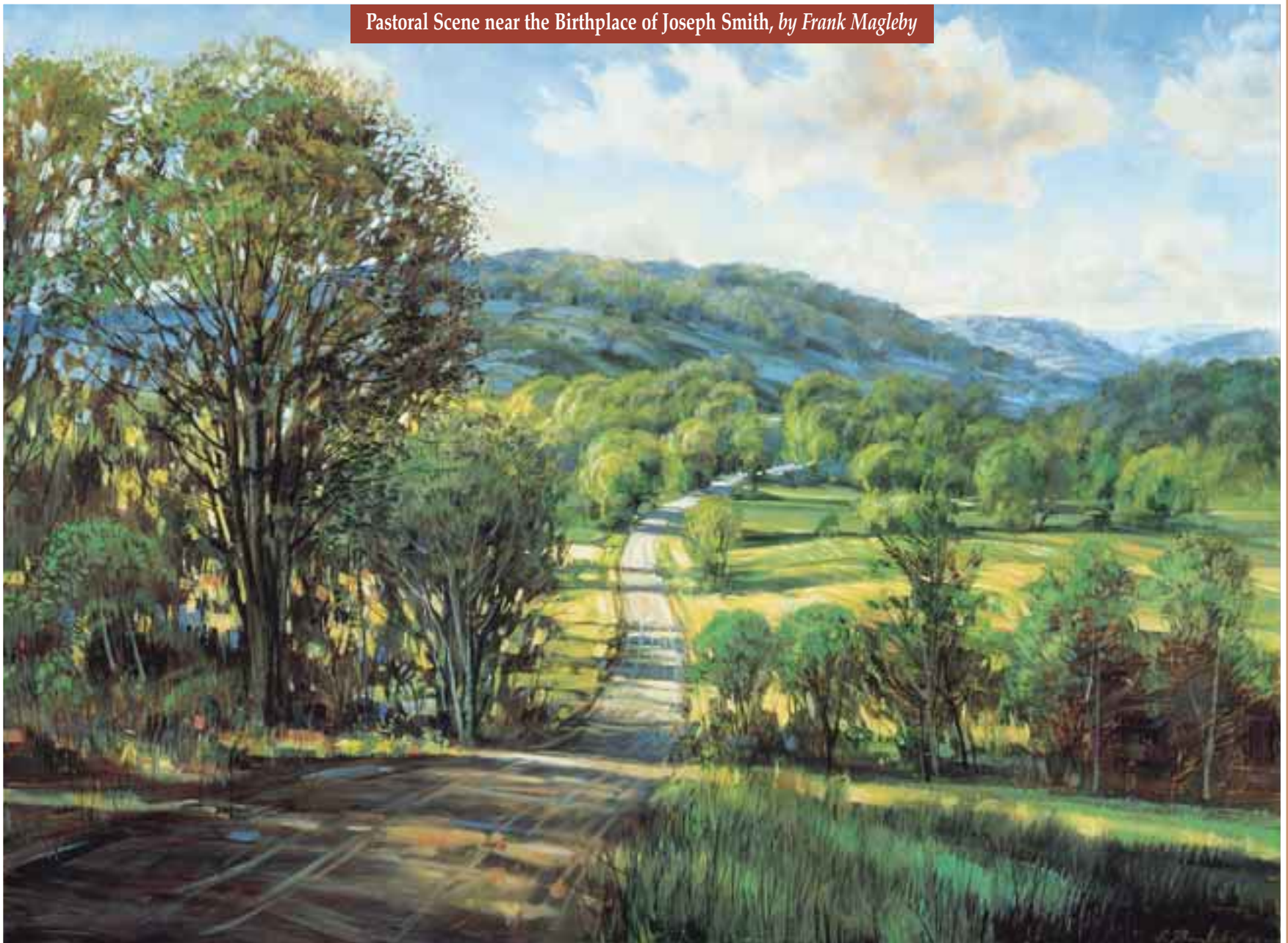
President Gordon B. Hinckley gave youth of the Church six B's to live by—be grateful, be smart, be clean, be true, be humble, and be prayerful—and offered a special prayer in their behalf during a fire-side on 12 November. Youth throughout the Western Hemisphere heard the prophet speak live during the satellite broadcast from the Conference Center in Salt Lake City. For the text of his remarks, see p. 2.

Helps for Getting Out of Debt

Despite resolves to get out of debt, many find their best efforts stymied unless honesty



Pastoral Scene near the Birthplace of Joseph Smith, by Frank Magleby



The rolling green hills of Vermont near the birthplace of the Prophet Joseph Smith still offer the peaceful environment that might have existed there when he was born at Sharon, Windsor County, on 23 December 1805. The boy Joseph spent the early years of his life in this area.



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