

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • JANUARY 2008

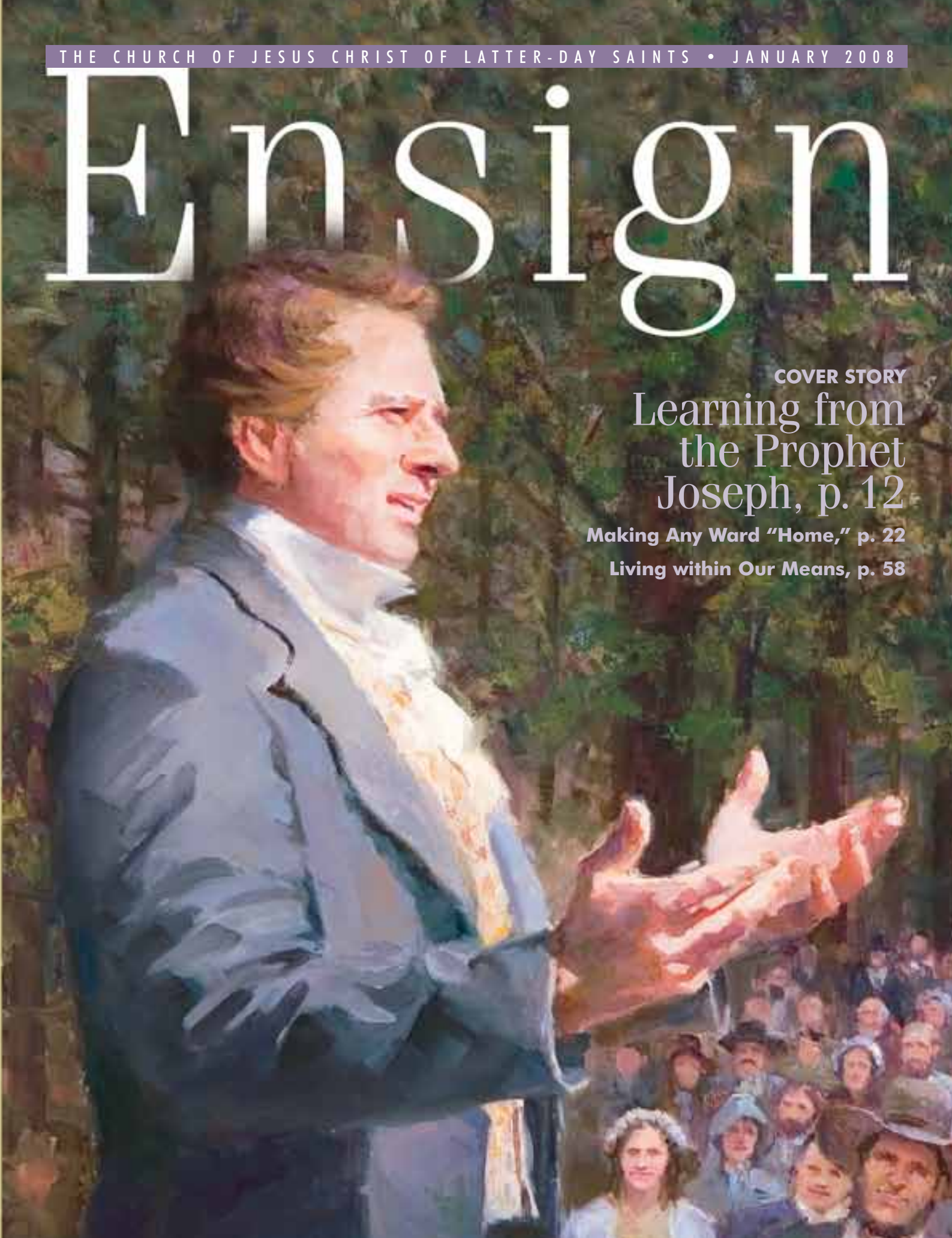
Ensign

COVER STORY

Learning from
the Prophet
Joseph, p. 12

Making Any Ward "Home," p. 22

Living within Our Means, p. 58





COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITION

The First Vision, sewn fabric quilt by Yvonne L. Harris

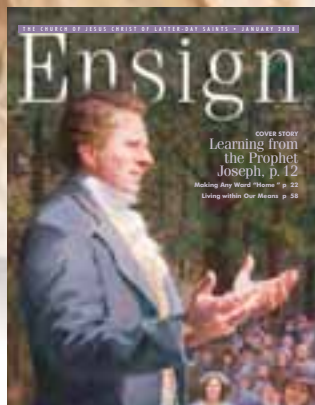
The thirteen Articles of Faith, briefly summarizing basic doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, surround a quilted depiction of the event heralding the Restoration of the gospel. In the First Vision, God the Father, through His Son, began the preparation of a prophet who would spread eternal truths again on the earth.

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We also welcome other submissions that show the gospel of Jesus Christ at work in your life. **Ensign Magazine Writers' Guidelines** are posted at <http://ensign.lds.org> under "Resources."

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

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Ensign

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USING THIS ISSUE

Teaching all. Questions are a great way to involve everyone—whether your group is a Sunday School class, a group of Primary children, or your own family. Review some different types of questions (p. 26) and consider how they might enhance your next teaching and learning opportunity.

Feeling at home. Whether you're new in your ward or branch or not, you can find a place in your Church family. See "Making Any Ward 'Home'" (p. 22) and consider putting into practice one of the suggestions this week.

Serving our neighbors. In "Not Just a Blanket" (p. 25), a mother recounts the love she felt from a gift made by the women of a nearby ward. To find out how you can donate such humanitarian gifts, visit www.providentliving.org and click on "Humanitarian Services."



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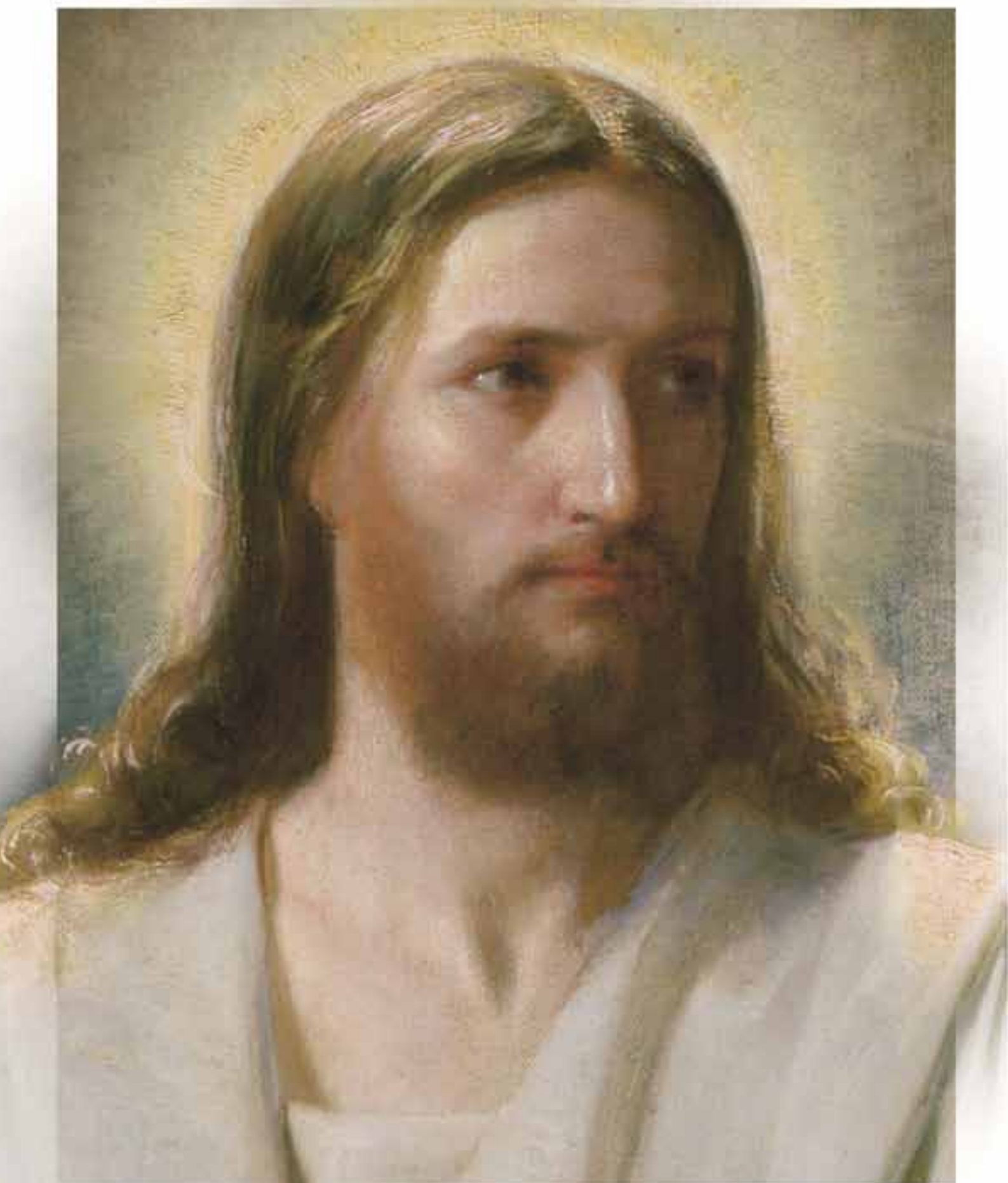
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COMING IN FEBRUARY

Look for articles on:

- How we can master our tempers.
- Finding balance, even amid conflicting demands.
- A mother's "experiment" in changing her family's behavior.



The Master Bridge Builder

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

First Counselor in the First Presidency

Many years ago I read a book titled *The Way to the Western Sea* by David S. Lavender. It provides a fascinating account of the epic journey of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark as they led their famed expedition across the North American continent to discover an overland route to the Pacific Ocean.

Their trek was a nightmare of back-breaking toil, deep gorges which had to be crossed, and extensive travel by foot, carrying with them their supply-laden boats to find the next stream on which to make their way.

As I read of their experiences, I frequently mused, "If only there were modern bridges to span the gorges or the raging waters." There came to my mind thoughts of magnificent bridges of our time which accomplish this task with ease: beautiful Golden Gate Bridge of San Francisco fame; sturdy Sydney, Australia, Harbour Bridge; and others in many lands.

In reality, we are all travelers—even explorers of mortality. We do not have the benefit of previous personal experience. We must pass over steep precipices and turbulent waters in our own journey here on earth.

Perhaps such a somber thought inspired

the poet Will Allen Dromgoole's classic poem titled "The Bridge Builder":

*An old man, going a lone highway,
Came at the evening, cold and gray,
To a chasm, vast and deep and wide,
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim;
The sullen stream had no fears for him;
But he turned when safe on the other side
And built a bridge to span the tide.
"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,
"You are wasting strength with building
here;
Your journey will end with the ending day;
You never again must pass this way;
You have crossed the chasm, deep and
wide—
Why build you the bridge at the eventide?"
The builder lifted his old gray head:
"Good friend, in the path I have come,"
he said,
"There followeth after me today
A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been naught to me
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building the bridge
for him."¹*



Jesus Christ was the supreme architect and builder of bridges for you, for me, for all humankind. He has built the bridges over which we must cross if we are to reach our heavenly home.

Jesus was an unfailing example of personal obedience as He kept the commandments of His Father. Tempted in the wilderness after His long fast, He replied, “Get thee hence, Satan.”

The message of the poem has prompted my thinking and comforted my soul, for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was the supreme architect and builder of bridges for you, for me, for all humankind. He has built the bridges over which we must cross if we are to reach our heavenly home.

The Savior’s mission was foretold. Matthew recorded, “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.”²

There followed the miracle of His birth and the gathering of the shepherds who came with haste to that stable, to that mother, to that child. Even the Wise Men, journeying from the East, followed that star and bestowed their precious gifts upon the young child.

The scripture records that Jesus “grew, and

waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him”³ and that He “went about doing good.”⁴

Bridges the Savior Built

What personal bridges did He build and cross here in mortality, showing us the way to follow? He knew mortality would be filled with dangers and difficulties. He declared:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”⁵

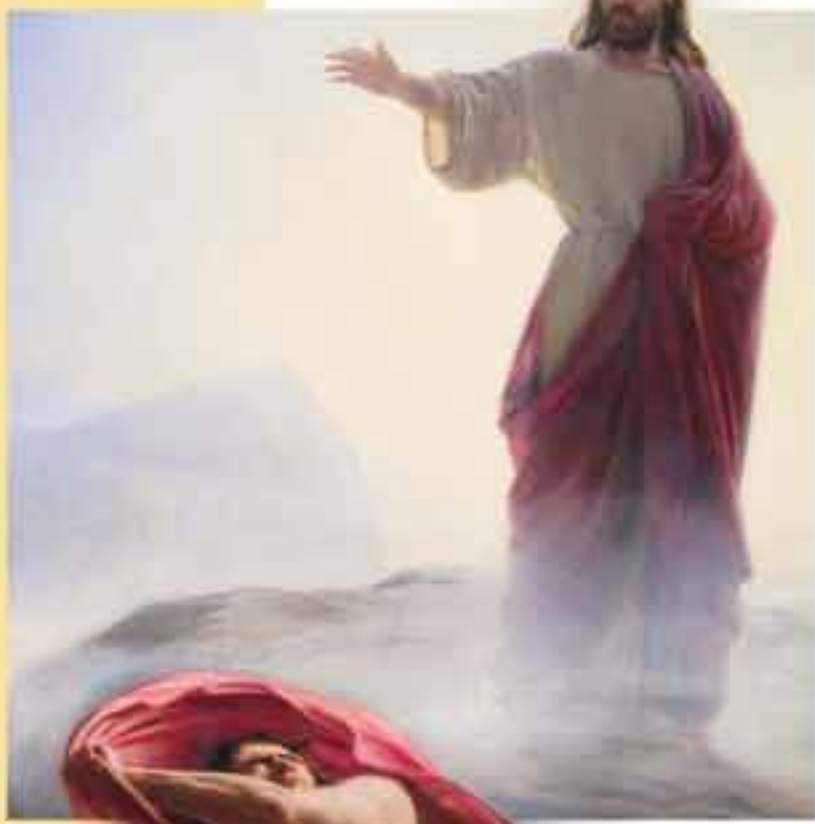
Jesus provided the **bridge of obedience**. He was an unfailing example of personal obedience as He kept the commandments of His Father.

When He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness, He was weak from fasting. Satan was at his seductive best in the offerings he proffered. His first was to satisfy the Savior’s physical needs, including His hunger. To this the Savior replied, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”⁶

Next Satan offered power. Responded the Savior, “It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”⁷

Finally the Savior was offered wealth and earthly glory. His response: “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”⁸

The Apostle Paul was inspired of the Lord to declare for our time, as well as for his: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted



above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”⁹

Lest we equivocate, I mention something Ted Koppel, TV news journalist, said in a university commencement address: “What Moses brought down from Mt. Sinai were not the Ten Suggestions. They are commandments.”¹⁰

A bit of humor is found in an account of a conversation between author Mark Twain and a friend. Said the wealthy friend to Twain, “Before I die, I plan to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I will climb to the top of Mount Sinai and read the Ten Commandments aloud.”

Replied Twain, “Why don’t you stay home and keep them?”

The second bridge provided by the Master for us to cross is the **bridge of service**. We look to the Savior as our example of service. Although He came to earth as the Son of God, He humbly served those around Him. He came forth from heaven to live on earth as mortal man and to establish the kingdom of God. His glorious gospel reshaped the thinking of the world. He blessed the sick; He caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. He even raised the dead to life.

In Matthew 25, the Savior tells us this concerning the faithful who will be on His right hand at His triumphal return:

“Then shall the King say unto them . . . , Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

“Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.



“Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

“When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

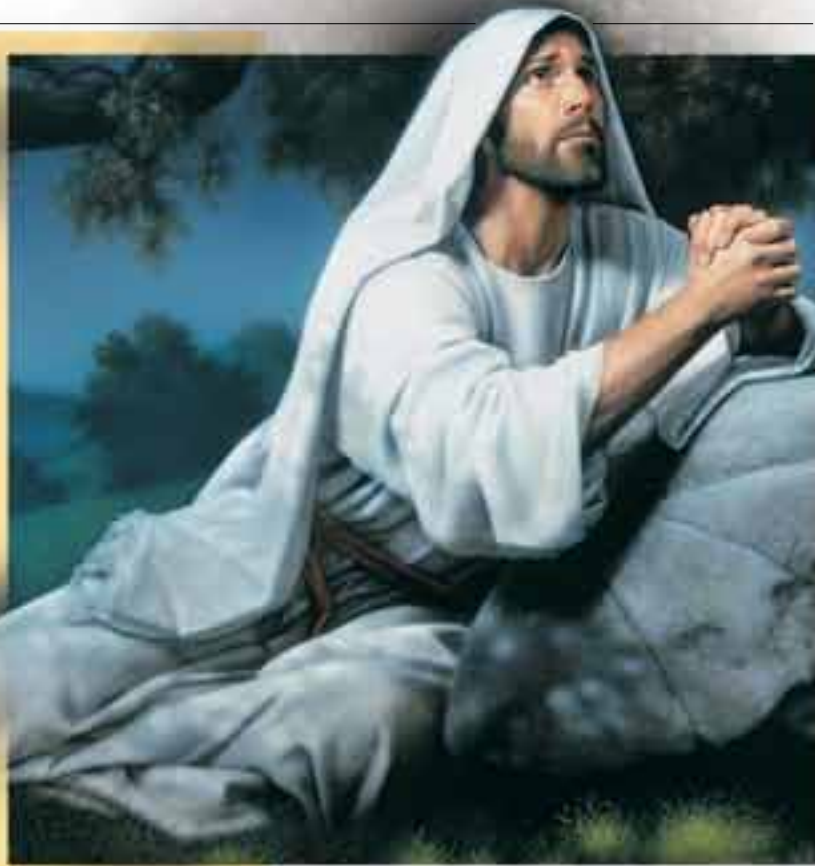
“Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”¹¹

Elder Richard L. Evans (1906–71) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once counseled, “We can’t do everything for everyone everywhere, but we can do something for someone somewhere.”¹²

May I share with you an account of an opportunity of service which came to me unexpectedly and in an unusual manner. I received a telephone call from a granddaughter of an old friend. She asked, “Do you remember Francis Brems, who was your Sunday School teacher?” I told her that I did.

We look to the Savior as our example of service. Although He came to earth as the Son of God, He humbly served those around Him.



He did for us what we could not do for ourselves; hence, humankind can cross the bridges He built—into life eternal.

She continued, "He is now 105 years of age. He lives in a small care center but meets with the entire family each Sunday, where he delivers a Sunday School lesson. Last Sunday Grandpa announced to us, 'My dears, I am going to die this week. Will you please call Tommy Monson and tell him this. He'll know what to do.'"

I visited Brother Brems the very next evening. I could not speak to him, for he was deaf. I could not write a message for him to read, for he was blind. What was I to do? I was told that his family communicated with him by taking the finger of his right hand and then tracing on the palm of his left hand the name of the person visiting and then any message. I followed the procedure and took his finger and spelled on the palm of his hand T-O-M-M-Y M-O-N-S-O-N. Brother Brems became excited and, taking my hands, placed them on his head. I knew his desire was to receive a priesthood blessing. The driver who had taken me to the care center joined me as we placed our hands on the head of Brother

Brems and provided the desired blessing.

Afterward tears streamed from his sightless eyes. He grasped our hands, and we read the movement of his lips. The message: "Thank you so much."

Within that very week, just as Brother Brems had predicted, he passed away. I received the telephone call and then met with the family as funeral arrangements were made. How thankful I am that a response to render service was not delayed.

The bridge of service invites us to cross over it frequently.

Finally, the Lord provided us the **bridge of prayer**. He directed, "Pray always, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing."¹³

I share with you an account described in a mother's letter to me relating to prayer. She wrote:

"Sometimes I wonder if I make a difference in my children's lives. Especially as a single mother working two jobs to make ends meet, I sometimes come home to confusion, but I never give up hope.

"My children and I were watching a television broadcast of general conference, and you were speaking about prayer. My son made the statement, 'Mother, you've already taught us that.' I said, 'What do you mean?' And he replied, 'Well, you've taught us to pray and showed us how, but the other night I came to your room to ask something and found you on your knees praying to Heavenly Father. If He's important to you, He'll be important to me.'"

The letter concluded, "I guess you never know what kind of influence you'll be until a child observes you doing yourself what you have tried to teach him to do."

The Master's Example

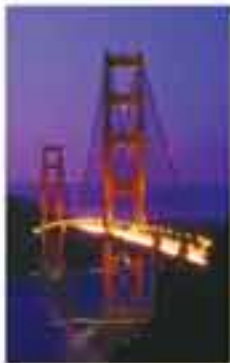
No relating of a prayer touches me so deeply as the prayer offered by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. I believe Luke describes it best:

"He . . . went . . . to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

"And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

"And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

"Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.



IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

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

1. Provide paper and writing utensils for family members, and have them

draw a bridge. Briefly introduce each bridge in the article by sharing selected counsel from President Monson. As each bridge is identified, invite family members to write above their drawings ways they can cross the bridge. You might also ask them, "What dangers and difficulties do these bridges help us overcome?" Encourage them to write answers to this question below their drawings.

2. Consider bringing an item or picture that represents each of the bridges spoken of in the article. Share a thought from President Monson about each bridge, and bear your testimony of how each has blessed your life.

3. Read aloud the poem quoted in the article. You could ask family members to share what they can do to build bridges for others. Conclude by listing the three bridges the Lord built for us and how these can help us in our daily lives.

"And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."¹⁴

In due time came the trek to the cross. What suffering He endured as He made His burdensome way, carrying His own cross. Heard were the words He uttered upon the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."¹⁵

At length Jesus declared, "It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."¹⁶

These events, coupled with His glorious Resurrection, completed the final bridge of our trilogy: the bridge of obedience, the bridge of service, the bridge of prayer.

Jesus, the Bridge Builder, spanned that vast chasm we call death. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."¹⁷ He did for us what we could not do for ourselves; hence, humankind can cross the bridges He built—into life eternal.

I close by paraphrasing the poem "The Bridge Builder":

*"You have crossed the chasm, deep and wide—
Why build you the bridge at the eventide?"
"There followeth after me today
A vast throng whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been naught to me
To that great throng may a pitfall be.
They too must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building the bridge for them."*

I pray that we may have the wisdom and determination to cross the bridges the Savior built for each of us. ■

NOTES

1. In James Dalton Morrison, ed., *Masterpieces of Religious Verse* (1948), 342.
2. Matthew 1:21.
3. Luke 2:40.
4. Acts 10:38.
5. Matthew 11:28–30.
6. Matthew 4:4.
7. Matthew 4:7.
8. Matthew 4:10.
9. 1 Corinthians 10:13.
10. Duke University commencement speech, May 10, 1987.
11. Matthew 25:34–40.
12. *Richard Evans' Quote Book* (1971), 51.
13. D&C 19:38.
14. Luke 22:39–44.
15. Luke 23:34.
16. John 19:30.
17. 1 Corinthians 15:22.



Ofttimes our obedience to the commandments of God becomes the very armor that protects us from evil.

Obedience

The First Law of Heaven

BY WILLIAM D. OSWALD

Second Counselor in the Sunday School
General Presidency

The early chapters of the Book of Mormon tell us that the Lord visited the prophet Lehi in “visions and in dreams” (1 Nephi 1:16), commanding him to leave Jerusalem and to take “nothing with him, save it were his family” (1 Nephi 2:4) and a few possessions and depart into the wilderness. Within a few pages we see a classic example of what happens to a family when some members desire to obey the commandments of the Lord while others rebel and disobey. As we “liken” (1 Nephi 19:23) these scriptures unto ourselves, and ponder the blessings that come to the obedient as opposed to the cursings that come to the disobedient, we ask, “What lessons might we learn as individuals and as families from these events?” Two lessons seem to stand out.

1. The Lord Will Prepare a Way If We Are Obedient

The scriptures teach that Lehi “was *obedient* unto the word of the Lord, wherefore he *did* as the Lord commanded him” (1 Nephi 2:3; emphasis added). This same character trait of obedience is seen also in Nephi’s response to his father’s request that he return to Jerusalem and go to the house of Laban to obtain important records. Nephi said, “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7).

If we compare Nephi’s response to that of Laman and Lemuel, we note that “Laman and Lemuel . . . did *murmur* against their father” (1 Nephi 2:12; emphasis added). As was the case with Lucifer when he rebelled against the

**Through obedience
Nephi successfully
brought back the
plates of Laban.**

Father in our premortal state, so also Laman and Lemuel's desire for power was greater than their willingness to follow and obey. Like the fallen son of the morning, Laman and Lemuel murmured in angry protestations—even after having seen an angel of the Lord! “How is it possible,” they asked, “that the Lord will deliver Laban into our hands?” (1 Nephi 3:31). At other times, no doubt, their murmurings were the silent “murmurings of [the] heart” (D&C 75:7).

2. Obedience Is the Armor That Will Protect Us from Evil

Ofttimes our obedience to the commandments of God becomes the very armor that protects us from evil (see Ephesians 6:11–17; D&C 27:15). An account from the life of President Harold B. Lee shows the “tender mercies” (1 Nephi 1:20) of the Lord to an obedient boy who would later become one of His latter-day prophets.

“I think maybe I was around ten or eleven years of age. I was with my father out on a farm away from our home, trying to spend the day busying myself until my father was ready to go home. Over the fence from our place were some tumbledown sheds that would attract a curious boy, and I was adventurous. I started to climb through the fence, and I heard a voice as clearly as you are hearing mine, calling me by name and saying, ‘Don’t go over there!’ I turned to look at my father to see if he [was] talking to me, but he was way up at the other end of the field. There was no person in sight.

I realized then, as a child, that there were persons beyond my sight, for I had definitely heard a voice.”¹

While serving as a mission president in a far-distant and sometimes dangerous land, I witnessed firsthand the protecting power of obedience in the lives of missionaries as described by President Boyd K. Packer. He taught that

obedience is the precondition attached to this protecting power.

“By following the rules,” said President Packer, “you will never make a serious mistake . . . either while you are on your mission or thereafter without being warned. You will never take the wrong road, you will never go around the wrong bend, or make the wrong decision *without your having been warned*. That pattern is the pattern of the Latter-day Saint. You were confirmed a member of the Church, and you had conferred upon you the gift of the Holy Ghost to be a guide and a companion to you.”²

Among the merciful blessings given by God to His Latter-day Saints is the commandment to pay heed to His living prophets. “I believe,” said President Gordon B. Hinckley, “that if we will walk in obedience to the commandments of God, . . . he will open a way even where there appears to be no way.”³ ■



**President Harold B. Lee
was obedient to the
Spirit when it warned
him as a child.**

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* (Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society course of study, 2000), 47.
2. “Some Things Every Missionary Should Know,” new mission presidents’ seminar, Salt Lake City, June 26, 2002.
3. “If Ye Be Willing and Obedient,” *Ensign*, July 1995, 2.



The Prophet Joseph Smith, *an Extraordinary Teacher*

BY ELDER JAY E. JENSEN

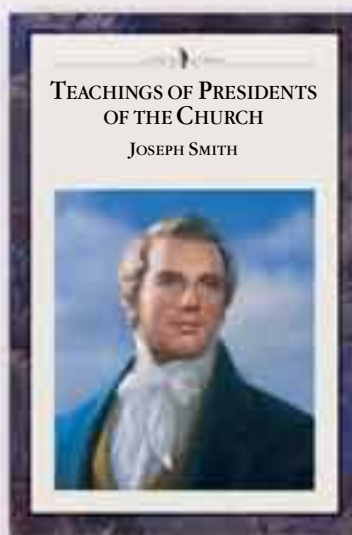
Of the Seventy
Executive Director, Curriculum Department

While recovering from four gunshot wounds he received in Carthage Jail and no doubt filled with awe concerning his beloved martyred Prophet, President John Taylor (1808–87) wrote these inspiring words: “Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it” (D&C 135:3).

Recently, President Gordon B. Hinckley testified: “The story of Joseph’s life is the story of a miracle. He was born in poverty. He was reared in adversity. He was driven from place to place, falsely accused, and illegally imprisoned. He was murdered at the age of 38. Yet in the brief space of 20 years preceding his death, he accomplished what none other has accomplished in an entire lifetime.”¹

Among Joseph Smith’s many accomplishments is laying the foundation of our latter-day doctrinal understanding. “This generation,” said the Lord to the Prophet Joseph, “shall have my word through you” (D&C 5:10).

Joseph had little formal education, but the Master Potter molded him into a prophet of wisdom and intelligence and into an extraordinary teacher with inspired insight. Many of his teachings are now published in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*. This extraordinary new book offers members worldwide an unparalleled opportunity to



learn about the Prophet of the Restoration and his teachings.

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith

Joseph Smith taught hundreds of inspiring sermons while he was the Prophet and President of the Church. Unfortunately, only about 50 were written down. For the past several years, many people, including professionals and volunteers, have diligently searched historical records to compile and review the statements that have been attributed

to the Prophet. His teachings were carefully studied, authenticated, and compiled. The compilation was then approved by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Each statement in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* was thoroughly researched for accuracy. Extensive and painstaking effort was expended to check original sources. This effort was necessary because the way in which sermons were recorded in the Prophet’s day differed significantly from the way sermons of later Presidents of the Church were recorded. As explained in the new book: “During the lifetime of Joseph Smith, . . . shorthand was not in widespread use. Therefore, the sermons he delivered were recorded imprecisely in longhand, generally by scribes, Church leaders, and other Church members. Almost all of Joseph Smith’s addresses were given extemporaneously, without prepared texts, so the

Our lives can be enriched and our testimonies bolstered by taking time to contemplate the teachings and events depicted in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*.

notes taken by those who listened to him constitute the only record of the discourses.”²

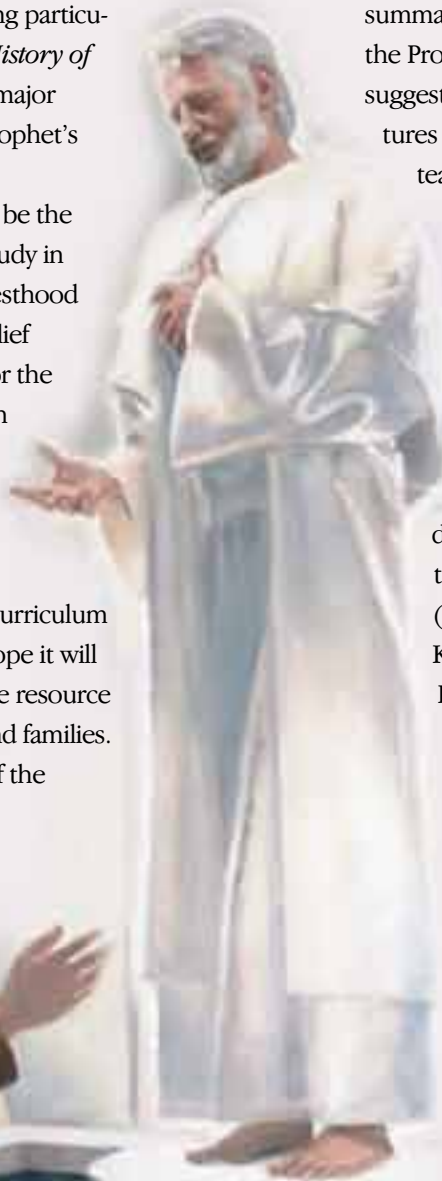
This new book contains inspiring statements from Joseph Smith on more than 125 gospel topics. The book’s index will help us more easily find the Prophet’s statements on those topics. The notes at the end of each chapter provide detailed information regarding the sources for the Prophet’s statements. In addition, an appendix provides explanations of the sources, giving particular attention to *History of the Church*, the major source for the Prophet’s teachings.

The book will be the text for gospel study in Melchizedek Priesthood quorums and Relief Society classes for the next two years on the second and third Sundays of each month. As the Executive Director of the Curriculum Department, I hope it will become a favorite resource for individuals and families. Every member of the

Church, 18 years and older, will receive a copy. It stands next to the other books in the *Teachings of Presidents of the Church* series, becoming an integral part of a library for personal and family gospel study.

This book is similar in style and format to the other books in the *Teachings of Presidents of the Church* series. Like others in the series, it contains an introduction that provides helpful tips for learning and teaching, a historical summary, an essay on the life and ministry of the Prophet, and, at the end of each chapter, suggestions for study and teaching. These features can enhance our ability to learn and teach about Joseph Smith and his prophetic statements.

Students and teachers will also benefit from the visuals and introductory material in each chapter. There are more than 140 photos, paintings, and illustrations—including artwork that has never before been published. The new art depicts such inspirational moments as the baptism of the Prophet’s father (chapter 7); Elijah appearing in the Kirtland Temple (chapter 26); the Prophet creating peace among angry militiamen with his congenial personality (chapter 29); the electrifying moment in the jail at Richmond, Missouri, when Joseph, bound in chains with a few of his faithful brethren, rose to his feet to rebuke the foulmouthed guards (chapter 30); and the miraculous healing of Elijah Fordham in Commerce, Illinois (chapter 33). Our lives can be enriched and our testimonies bolstered by taking time to contemplate



THE PROPHET AS A TEACHER

The Prophet Joseph Smith was a remarkable gospel teacher, in part due to his thirst to learn. He could hold the attention of thousands for hours while he preached the truths of the restored gospel. President Brigham Young (1801–77) described the Prophet's inspired teaching ability: "He took heaven, figuratively speaking, and brought it down to earth; and he took the earth, brought it up, and opened up, in plainness and simplicity, the things of God. . . . Did not Joseph do the same to your understandings? Would he not take the Scriptures and make them so plain and simple that everybody could understand?"¹

Elder Parley P. Pratt (1807–57) recorded an occasion when the Prophet's extraordinary teaching ability influenced thousands in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: "A very large church was opened for him to preach in, and about three thousand people assembled to hear him. Brother Rigdon spoke first, and dwelt on the Gospel, illustrating his doctrine by the Bible. When he was through, Brother Joseph arose like a lion about to roar; and being full of the Holy Ghost, spoke in great power, bearing testimony of the visions he had seen, the ministering of angels which he had enjoyed; and how he had found the plates of the Book of Mormon, and translated them by the gift and power of God. He commenced by saying: 'If nobody else had the courage to testify of so glorious a message from Heaven, and of the finding of so glorious a record, he felt to do it in justice to the people, and leave the event with God.'"

Elder Pratt continued: "The entire congregation were astounded; electrified, as it were, and overwhelmed with the sense of the truth and power by which he spoke, and the wonders which he related. A lasting impression was made; many souls were gathered into the fold."²

On at least one occasion, the Lord performed a miracle so the people could hear the Prophet teach. Amasa Potter was present during a sermon Joseph Smith gave near the Nauvoo Temple in April 1844. Of that experience, Brother Potter recorded: "When he had spoken about thirty minutes there came up a heavy wind and storm. The dust was so dense that we could not see each other any distance, and some of the people were leaving when Joseph called out to them to stop and let their prayers ascend to Almighty God that the winds may cease blowing and the rain



stop falling, and it should be so. In a very few minutes the winds and rain ceased and the elements became calm as a summer's morning. The storm divided and went on the north and south of the city, and we could see in the distance the trees and shrubs waving in the wind, while where we were it was quiet for one hour, and during that time one of the greatest sermons that ever fell from the Prophet's lips was preached on the great subject of the dead."³

The Prophet Joseph Smith was eager for Latter-day Saints and others to receive all they could, and he tirelessly tried to teach them what God had so liberally revealed to him. In a June 1839 discourse at Commerce, Illinois, the Prophet taught, "God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them."⁴ During another discourse in April 1843, he said: "It is my meditation all the day, and more than my meat and drink, to know how I shall make the Saints of God comprehend the visions that roll like an overflowing surge before my mind. Oh! how I would delight to bring before you things which you never thought of!"⁵

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 344–45.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 150.
3. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 494.
4. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 268.
5. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 520.

the events depicted in these visual representations.

The introductory section of each chapter, titled “From the Life of Joseph Smith,” presents a view of the Prophet’s life and the major events of the Restoration. We’ll read about his roles as husband and father, his relationships with friends, and his encounters with enemies. We’ll read about his success as a leader and his sorrow from persecution. Our affection and appreciation for him will increase as we read and ponder his personal experiences. Our knowledge and testimonies of Joseph Smith, the Prophet of the Restoration, will be fortified. Let’s consider just a few of the inspired teachings this new publication contains.

The First Vision

The first chapter of this remarkable new book begins, as did the Restoration, with the First Vision. The humble prayer of Joseph Smith, a 14-year-old boy in 1820, parted the veil of silence that had covered the earth for centuries. The occasion was of such significance that Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to young Joseph. He

became a firsthand witness of the reality of God and His Son. Toward the end of his life, the Prophet taught: “I am going to inquire after God, for I want you all to know Him, and to be familiar with Him. . . . You will then know that I am His servant.”³ The contents of chapter 1 allow us to study and ponder the Prophet’s personal account of his miraculous vision.

The Book of Mormon

In parts of six chapters, this new book also emphasizes the importance of the Book of Mormon by retelling the events surrounding its coming to light and its translation and printing. Of his experience translating the prophetic writings, the Prophet later declared, “By the power of God I translated the Book of Mormon from hieroglyphics, the knowledge of which was lost to the world, in which wonderful event I stood alone, an unlearned youth, to combat the worldly wisdom and multiplied ignorance of eighteen centuries, with a new revelation.”⁴ The historical accounts of the coming forth of the Book



of Mormon contained in this new book are accompanied by the Prophet's teachings on subjects such as the scriptures, repentance, prayer, personal revelation, and the organization of the Church.

This new publication includes the oft-quoted promise by the Prophet: "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book."⁵ Experience teaches us that those who read the Book of Mormon often and apply its teachings will enjoy heaven's inspiration along life's trying path.

By pondering and praying as we read the Book of Mormon and what Joseph Smith taught about it, we can come to know that the Book of Mormon was not the product of a nineteenth-century farm boy—or of any other person of that time. We will realize with each new reading that it was a gift from God, written and compiled by earlier disciples, preserved through centuries of time, and translated by the mighty seer Joseph Smith. It is tangible evidence of Joseph Smith's calling as the Prophet of the Restoration.

The Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods

The new book briefly tells of the restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods and their keys. The Prophet testified of receiving the authority and keys of the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist. "Suffice it to say," he declared, "I went into the woods to inquire of the Lord, by prayer, His will concerning me, and I saw an angel [John the Baptist], and he laid his hands upon my head, and ordained me to a Priest after the order of Aaron, and to hold the keys of this Priesthood."⁶ A few weeks later, the Apostles Peter, James, and John appeared and conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery the Melchizedek Priesthood and its keys. Ten years after these miraculous appearances, the Prophet testified, "We believe that no man can administer salvation through the gospel, to the souls of men, in the name of Jesus Christ, except he is authorized from God, by revelation, or by being



ordained by some one whom God hath sent by revelation."⁷

Today we humbly proclaim that God authorized Joseph Smith through divinely appointed ministers and that the Prophet extended that authority to others by conferring upon them the priesthood and its keys. With gratitude, we declare that there has been an unbroken chain of conferrals and ordinations since that time to the present day.

Temple Ordinances

"In the spring of 1836, after three years of work and sacrifice," we read in chapter 26, "the Kirtland Saints finally saw their beautiful temple complete, the first temple in this dispensation."⁸ Hundreds of people gathered for the dedication. We can read of the glorious manifestations that occurred at the dedication, as well as what Joseph Smith taught about the power to seal families together forever. The Prophet reiterated the importance of temples when he taught in June 1843, "There are certain ordinances and principles that, when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose."⁹

Since 1836 more than 120 temples have been built and dedicated to the Lord. Through temple ordinances, individuals are endowed, families are sealed, saving ordinances for deceased ancestors are performed, covenants are made, and lives are blessed. All this became possible because of the Lord's work through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Continuing Revelation

Some of Joseph Smith's most profound teachings on revelation, living prophets, and the consequences for rejecting living prophets can be found in chapter 16. The Prophet once declared, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded upon direct revelation, as the true Church of God has ever been, according to the Scriptures."¹⁰

Since the time of Joseph Smith, revelation has come through men called as prophets to lead the Lord's Church. The Lord has not left His servants, His Church, or His people alone. We affirm that He grants divine guidance to those He calls to administer His kingdom.

Family

The Prophet's counsel and wisdom regarding the importance and eternal nature of the family are highlighted in chapter 42. Parley P. Pratt once noted, "It was Joseph Smith who taught me how to prize the endearing relationships of father and mother, husband and wife; of brother and sister, son and daughter."¹¹ The Prophet's personal journal records a touching entry about his gravely ill father: "Waited on my father again, who was very sick. In secret prayer in the morning, the Lord said, 'My servant, thy father shall live.' I waited on him all this day with my heart raised to God in the name of Jesus Christ, that He would restore him to health, that I might be blessed with his company and advice, esteeming it one of the greatest earthly blessings to be blessed with the society of parents, whose mature years and experience render them capable of administering the most wholesome advice."¹²

An Accessible Source

This new Church publication presents the Prophet's inspired gospel teachings on missionary work, obedience, death, adversity, unity, leadership, apostasy, forgiveness, friends, and many more gospel topics. In an unprecedented way, Joseph Smith's teachings are now accessible to Church members all around the world through this

MAKING THE MOST OF THIS BOOK

- Priesthood and Relief Society leaders should ensure that every member 18 years and older receives a copy of this new Church publication.

- All of us as gospel learners can read, study, and ponder each chapter before class and go prepared to share our insights and testimonies during the class discussion.

- The suggestions in the introduction can help teachers focus on the contents of the book rather than supplement it with other resources.

- Parents and children can develop family home evening lessons by using the pictures, stories, quotations, and questions in the book.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ISRAEL ANTUNES VIEIRA

book. Never before have so many of God's children had such access to his prophetic statements.

What began with a single soul in a solitary place in the spring of 1820 has become a family of millions who seek to follow Jesus Christ. To the heart and soul of each faithful member, the Holy Ghost bears testimony of a humble and seemingly ordinary boy whom the Lord molded into an extraordinary prophet and teacher. We can keep the fire of that testimony kindled by learning and living the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith as now published in this extraordinary new book. ■

NOTES

1. "Joseph Smith Jr.—Prophet of God, Mighty Servant," *Liabona and Ensign*, Dec. 2005, 4.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 558.
3. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 38.
4. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 60.
5. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 64.
6. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 85.
7. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 110.
8. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 307.
9. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 416.
10. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 195.
11. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 481.
12. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 483.

It All Began with You

BY TOM ROUGHLEY

*You never knew it, Elder,
but your influence led to the saving
of my soul and hundreds more.*

It all began with you, Elder Glazier. You were on your mission in England in 1963. You were at Joe Hesketh's place, the tiniest of terrace houses, tucked away behind the old parish church in the medieval town of Shrewsbury.

I was a 34-year-old bus driver and a member of Joe's band. I played the accordion.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY GREGG THORKELOSON



**The message
you brought
to England
went with us halfway
around the world,
where the poor yet
faithful were blessed
by that same
message.**

Joe was a workmate of mine. His son had been killed in an accident, and Joe was looking for answers. When I arrived on that memorable evening, you had your flannel board propped up on the kitchen table. I knocked your bike over as I swung my old black accordion case through the front door. Remember?

Well, perhaps you won't, but I'll never forget you, Elder. At least I'll never forget what you said.

I guess you might say that's not a very profound statement, but would you consider it profound if I told you that what you said, and the way you said it, has been indirectly responsible for the saving of a hundred or more souls? And that's a conservative estimate.

Cultivating the Seed

I never saw you again, but the seed had been sown. About a year later my family and I moved to Canada. The first home we rented there was behind the Calgary stake center. We knew nothing about what went on there except that on Sunday mornings a lot of men attended without any women. (This was in the days when priesthood meeting was held before the other Sunday meetings.)

As I learned of the gospel, I began to experience miracles in my life as the hand of the Lord prepared my family for his purposes.

It probably seemed to my parents back in England that our letters home were a little exaggerated as we related tales of how we bought a home with only \$2.50 in our pockets; how I applied for a job only to be turned down and then offered a supervisor's job for more money; and

how I was able to play as a musician and earn, in three nights, the equivalent of a week's pay in England.

Baptism eventually came as the result of being fellow-shipped by Brother Loveday, a real estate agent looking for business. As he made his first inquiry, he also asked, "What do you know about Mormons?" All I knew was you, Elder, so I was willing to listen. I told him that I liked religious arguments. This one I lost!

About a year later I was a stake missionary, and we were blessed with many baptisms in our area, all referrals. One of those baptized would become a stake mission president who in turn brought many other members into the Church.

Sharing the Seed

The crowning reward to this point, Elder Glazier, has been serving a mission to India with my wife.

For the first couple of days I just stared out the wrought-iron covered windows of our house, not wanting to step outside, never realizing that soon we would be happily roaming through rural villages where English was not understood and where light-skinned faces were rarely seen. These were early days with many obstacles to encounter and overcome.

We worked among some of the poor of the earth, the likes of whom the Savior ministered to in His time. They taught us so much about humility, love, spirituality, and faith, as well as the tenacity of the human soul.

We became good friends with Gita, a lovely young doctor from India and a good Catholic. She and her husband administered to the needs of the poor in the area. One Sunday evening she came with us to the village of Semmedu to see if she could help any sick members, and when we arrived we were astonished to see a huge line of people awaiting us. We never found out how they knew we were bringing the doctor. After she had finished her examination and we dispensed the aspirin and iron tablets, a mother brought her daughter and asked that she be given a blessing "to heal her sick." We were there for hours and, with the

help of one of our young translators, gave priesthood blessings to nearly all of the villagers. The Spirit was intense, and the faith of the poorest of the earth remarkable.

In another instance, a young woman who lived near our tiny place of worship shaved her head and sold her hair in order to feed herself and her baby because her husband had left her. We helped as best we could. I think that was the night we realized how easy it was to love the people but how hard it would be to solve all of their problems. And that was the night when I knew that this mission was for me.

Reaping the Harvest

One of the important tasks we undertook was to teach the village people the gospel. What a wonderful thing to sit in front of those beautiful faces. Surely they had a humility rarely seen in the world of plenty.

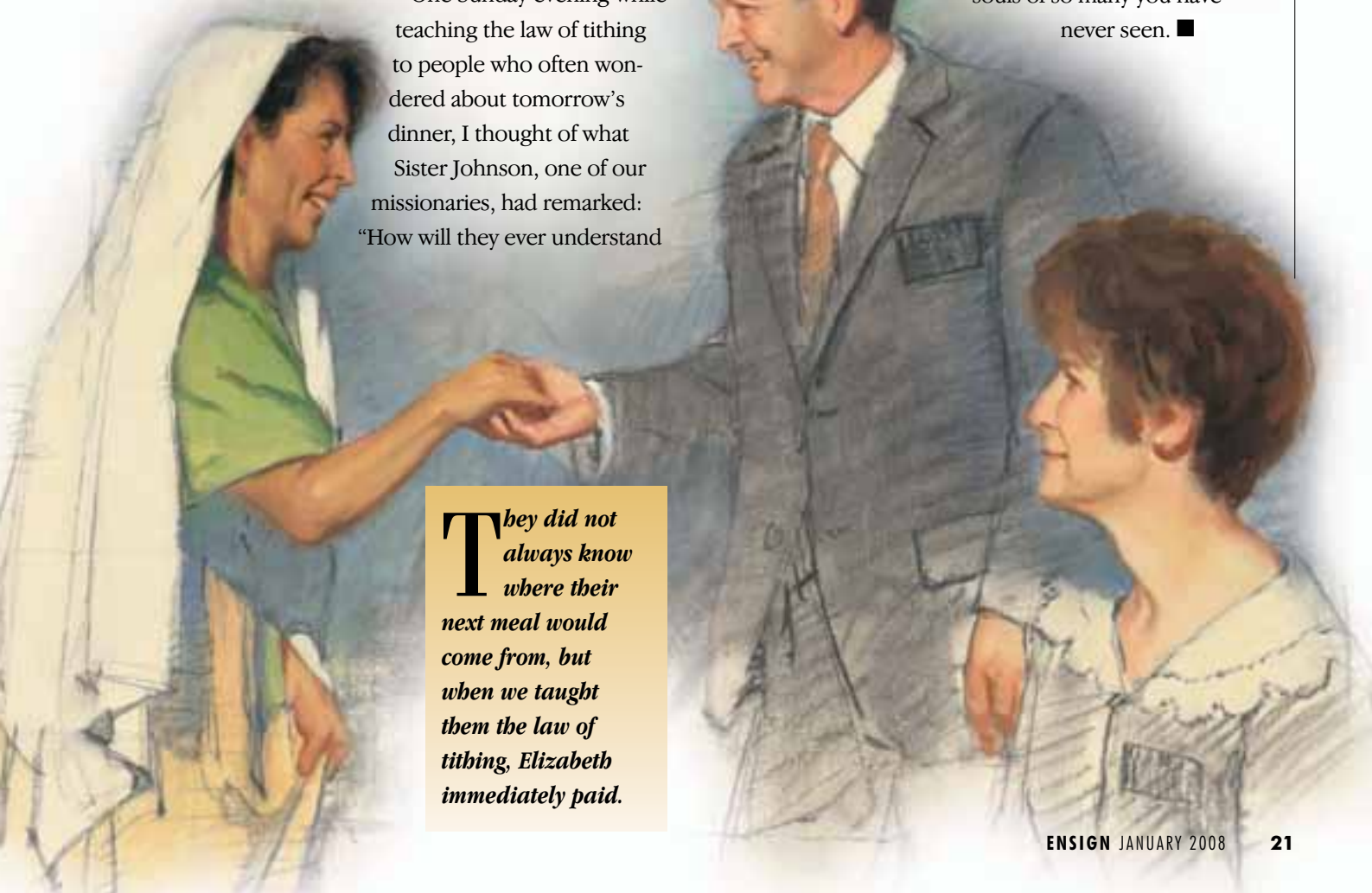
One Sunday evening while teaching the law of tithing to people who often wondered about tomorrow's dinner, I thought of what Sister Johnson, one of our missionaries, had remarked: "How will they ever understand

this at home?" I asked the village people if they could live the law of tithing. Elizabeth rose to her feet and walked to her son Samuel, a village elder. He gave her the equivalent of 30 cents, and, smiling, she passed it on to me. Surely this was the widow's mite.

We were able to baptize in the river and in borrowed water-storage tanks, leeches and all. We were also able to experience spiritual moments the likes of which we have not had since.

What matters for now is to be able to tell you that the seed you brought across the ocean to us in England was nurtured and taken around the world and planted in the hearts of those who would listen.

God bless you, Elder Glazier, for being part of saving the souls of so many you have never seen. ■



They did not always know where their next meal would come from, but when we taught them the law of tithing, Elizabeth immediately paid.

MAKING ANY WARD “Home”

Starting over in a new ward or branch can be intimidating. Here are five tips for turning strangers into friends.

BY KATHRYN P. FONG

Years ago, when I returned to church on a regular basis after a period of inactivity, I was certain everyone in the ward knew I was a remorseful sinner looking for repentance. It seemed to me that their goodness was apparent in their bright smiles and sweet testimonies and that my sins made me dim and pitiful by comparison. Looking back, I realize that new people in a variety of circumstances can feel overexposed or especially sensitive. Walking into a new meetinghouse, sitting next to people you don't know, and singing from a hymnbook alone can be daunting tasks when you are filled with self-consciousness.

As a single woman with no children, I have found that starting over in a new ward can be intimidating. Yet that nerve-racking trip into a chapel filled with strangers is one I have made over and over as I have moved frequently to follow my career. Over the years I have learned

to adopt a new attitude about my ward and to work at eventually turning those strangers into friends and warm acquaintances. The following techniques can help all of us feel at home in any ward or branch, no matter where in the world we go.

Remember why we come to church. A chapel is a sacred and safe place for Heavenly Father's children to gather to worship Him. There we can be united in prayer, song, and purpose. Avoid judging others or assuming that others are judging you. It helps me to remember that everyone who makes the effort to come to church is trying, as I am, to partake of the Savior's Atonement and keep His commandments.

Introduce yourself. I've learned to seek out the bishopric and to introduce myself first thing so they know that I am new. After that, I make sure I know who the high priests group leader is because he will assign high priests as my home teachers. In addition, as a sister, I



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUKE



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT CASEY, EXCEPT AS NOTED



Swallow your nervousness, and introduce yourself to ward or branch members. As you get to know people, you will begin to feel at home at church.

Serving ward members and participating in meetings can help us get to know each other better and remember one another. These situations also give us the opportunity to introduce ourselves.



ensure I know who the members of the Relief Society presidency are. The ward clerk also needs my address and phone number, and he can request my records from my previous ward. These people have introduced me to other ward members, helped me find my way to ward and stake activities, and provided support when I have received a calling.

I used to sit in the last pew, close to the door, so that immediately following the closing prayer, I could dash out before anyone talked to me and asked me who I was. But walking in and out of meetings with your eyes cast down—or focused on the exit—does little to help you acclimate in a new ward.

Swallow your nervousness, and approach the person in front of you. Shake the hands of those who teach the classes you attend or who speak in sacrament meeting (you can meet them in the foyer afterward). If you take

a moment to scope the room before you sit down, you can meet different individuals and families each time you attend a meeting. Be bold enough to ask for a ride to a ward or branch activity. It's often easier to walk in with someone than to enter alone. Ask for a ward or branch directory; it will help you recall names. Before long, names and faces begin to match, and people are no longer strangers. Neither are you.

Serve. Find ways you can help neighbors and ward or branch members, even if it is as simple as holding a door open and greeting them as they enter. (This will help others remember you.) Sign up on volunteer lists.

Find out who is sick or hospitalized, and visit them. Accept callings. As appropriate, let the bishop or branch president know what skills you have to offer beyond your calling, and tell him he can count on you when the need arises.

Be prepared to participate. Sunday School and priesthood and Relief Society meetings follow a lesson schedule. Obtain the lesson manuals, read the lessons in advance, and be prepared to read scriptures or to illustrate the principles taught by sharing your life experiences. While public speaking can be overwhelming, settle your fears, and be prepared to share your testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel.

Look for new faces. Reach out to others in a way you would like them to reach out to you. After a while you'll find that you are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). You are at home in your new Church family.

Ward or branch families are all-inclusive—no one should be left out. It may not be possible to always find friendship with each member, but if we share our love of the gospel, if our testimonies are pure, if we are willing to share one another's burdens, and if we exercise our desire to serve the Lord through serving one another, we are a family. I am grateful that no matter where I go in this world, every branch or ward consists of other children of Heavenly Father. I can truly testify that the ward I now attend is the happiest place for me to be. ■





Not Just a Blanket

BY JULIA A. WAGNER

I shifted my weary body on the thin hospital cot and opened my eyes. Glancing at my husband, who was still asleep, I quietly slipped my feet into my shoes. The events of the night before hovered in a haze over my mind. Words like *heart defect*, *surgery*, and *code blue* were blurred with worry and concern for our 10-day-old son. The doctor had told us how lucky we were that Jacob was still alive.

How I had prayed and pleaded the night before as tears coursed down my cheeks and carried me into sleep. I thought of our tiny son in his incubator, surrounded by tubes and wires. How I yearned to take him in my arms, to feel his tender weight, and to whisper reassurances in his ear. How I had pleaded for comfort for each of us, but especially for him.

I stepped into the bathroom and splashed water on my face, shocked at how red and tired my eyes looked. I washed my hands with the pungent antibacterial soap, the scent lingering in my nose, and walked down the empty corridor to the pediatric intensive care unit. I picked up the phone hanging on the wall and listened for the receptionist inside.

"Hello?"

"Julia Wagner to see Jacob."

"Come right in," the cheerful voice replied.

The doors slowly swung open. As I walked in I saw a nurse busy checking our baby's vital signs. "He's doing well this morning," she said.

I crossed to his side and saw, gently rolled and wrapped around him, a beautiful blanket in all the pastel colors of Easter. "Oh!" I whis-

pered. I had not thought to be audible, but the perceptive nurse turned to me and said, "Many groups and organizations donate blankets for the babies in the intensive care unit. This one came with a card."

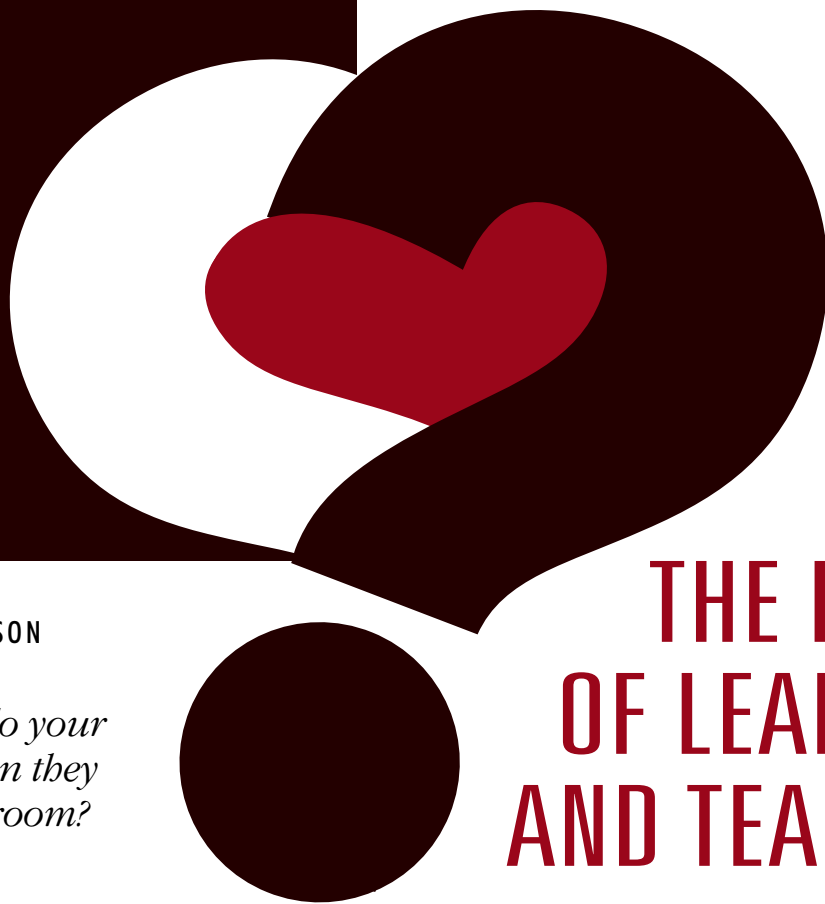
I accepted the card from her hand and read, "Made with loving hands for your baby by the women of the Four Corners Ward in Salem, Oregon, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

I was filled with love and gratitude as I realized the answer to my prayers. The Lord had wrapped our son in the arms of His love during that long and dreadful night. I thought back on the times I had helped make blankets in similar Relief Society service projects, thinking, "It is just a blanket. How can a blanket help and comfort tiny babies and their families in such great need?"

How wrong I had been. I looked at that blanket, like arms wrapped around my boy, keeping him safe, and I envisioned the Savior's arms. I knew He was watching over and loving us. ■

Note: Jacob Wagner had open-heart surgery when he was 14 days old. He is now healthy, thriving, and bringing joy to his family.

Questions,



BY BRIAN GUDMUNDSON

Teachers, what do your students say when they leave your classroom?

THE HEART OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

“**I** sure enjoy going to class. I learn something every time I attend, and I always feel the Spirit.” Or, “I’m so glad to be out of there. It’s so boring. The teacher does all the talking.”

Learning the art of teaching can be a challenge, but Doctrine and Covenants 88:122 outlines several principles that can help you become a more effective teacher and change the lives of your students: “Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not *all* be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let *all* listen unto his sayings, that when *all* have spoken that *all* may be edified of *all*, and that every man may have an equal privilege” (emphasis added). According to this verse, learning is enhanced and class members are edified when they have the opportunity to participate, and one of the best ways teachers can help class members participate is by asking questions that encourage students to think, feel, and share.

Asking Questions

Speaking to religious educators in the Church, President Henry B. Eyring, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

“To ask and answer questions is at the heart of all learning and teaching. The Master asked, answered, and sometimes chose not to answer questions in his ministry. . . .

“Some questions invite inspiration. Great teachers ask those. That may take just a small change of words, an inflection of the voice. Here is a question that might not invite inspiration: ‘How is a true prophet recognized?’ That question invites an answer which is a list, drawn from memory, of the scriptures and the words of living prophets. . . .

“But we could ask the question this way, with just a small difference: ‘When have you felt you were in the presence of a prophet?’ That will invite individuals to search their





As you give students time to ponder your questions, the Spirit will witness to them, and they will feel prompted to share their impressions with the class.

memories for feelings. After asking, we might wait for a moment before calling on someone to respond. Even those who do not speak will be thinking of spiritual experiences. That will invite the Holy Ghost.”¹

Elder Gene R. Cook, formerly of the Seventy, has also counseled us on the role of a teacher in the classroom. He said: *“The major role of a teacher is to prepare the way so that the [students] will have a spiritual experience with the Lord. . . . All true gospel teaching is done by the Holy Ghost. . . . We must be careful not to get in the way. . . . The most important thing a teacher can do is to help the student feel the Spirit of the Lord.”*²

How much should students participate in class? A teacher who takes up most of the class time speaking is likely talking too much. In many lessons, student participation can fill about half of the lesson time.³

With the focus of helping students participate and feel the Spirit, much of your lesson preparation should be devoted to developing inspired questions that will help your students *discover* gospel principles *for themselves*. Using carefully worded questions, you can guide your students through a discovery experience, which will have far greater effect than a lecture experience, in which a teacher dumps information on students. When you do this, students will move from being idle listeners to active participants as they search their hearts for answers to prayerfully

prepared questions. This will allow the Spirit to have a greater influence on each person. The principles taught *by the Spirit* during these discovery experiences will be tailored to the specific needs and spiritual level of each student. The lessons you will teach will then change the hearts, minds, and lives of Heavenly Father’s children.

The following suggestions will aid you in formulating great questions for your lessons.

Questions to Avoid

1. Yes/No questions. (Will prayer help us develop faith?)
2. Questions that require only one- or two-word answers. (Which principle of the gospel is faith?)
3. Questions with obvious answers. (Is faith in Jesus Christ an important principle of the gospel?)
4. Clichéd questions. (How can we use faith in our daily lives?)
5. Controversial questions. (Have you ever lived contrary to the prophet’s counsel and been blessed in your actions?)

Productive Questions

Asking questions which cause students to think, feel, and share leads to discussions which give students the opportunity to be edified and to edify one another. This can be accomplished by using a series of search, analysis, and application questions.

1. Search questions. These questions help students discover facts, understand a scriptural story line, or grasp basic doctrine. They help students focus on the particular text being studied and provide the foundation for deeper gospel questions. For a question to qualify as a search question, the answer to the question must be found in the material being studied. Using Doctrine and Covenants 88:122 as our text, search questions might include:

- How many times does the word *all* appear in this verse?
- What are two things each class member is supposed to do?
- What is the promise when *all* participate?

Search questions may also be reworded to form “look for” *statements* given to the class just prior to reading the text. For example, “As we read this verse, *look for* how many times the word *all* appears.” This simple activity focuses students on what will be discussed and adds purpose and meaning as the text is being read.

2. *Analysis questions.* These questions should build on the information found from asking search questions. They help students discover a deeper level of understanding beyond the facts or story line and help them to think about and ponder the principles being taught. These questions may explore what the characters were feeling or how the principles in the scripture passage relate to other gospel principles. Analysis questions for Doctrine and Covenants 88:122 might include:

- According to this verse, how does a teacher's role differ from that of the students?
- *How* are class members being edified?
- What does the word *privilege* mean to you in the context of this verse?

3. *Application questions.* These questions build on the information discussed from the analysis questions and should help students apply what they have learned *to their own lives*. Responses to application questions may differ considerably from student to student as the Spirit whispers to the heart of each individual according to his or her needs and spiritual level. Remember, the Spirit is doing the real teaching in your classroom. Application questions for Doctrine and Covenants 88:122 might include:

- What do you feel is being taught in this verse?
- How can you invite the Spirit into your classroom by asking questions?
- What can you do to ensure that each student has an *equal privilege* to speak during your lessons?

4. *Questions that lead to testifying of truth.* Application questions which draw on past experiences of students are particularly powerful. These questions encourage students to bear witness of ways the principle being taught has *already* affected their lives. As they ponder these questions, students will come to recognize times when they have experienced the Lord's hand in their own lives. These are spiritual experiences that will invite the Holy Ghost. As your students share their experiences, the Spirit will testify to the other students the truthfulness of the principle being taught, and thus "all may



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

Consider having each family member create and share a short lesson using the ideas in this article. This could be accomplished by:

1. Selecting a small scripture block and teaching a simple lesson using the three types of questions discussed in the article.
2. Discussing with family members the questions you used and how they worked in the lesson.
3. Inviting family members to plan and teach their own lesson using the same questioning ideas.

Give encouragement and help to family members during their lesson preparation. Praise them after they finish teaching.

be edified of all." In sharing, class members also become more committed to living the principle about which they are testifying. Examples of these kinds of questions for Doctrine and Covenants 88:122 might include:

- When have you felt the Spirit as you have participated in a classroom discussion?
- How has hearing the testimony of another class member strengthened your ability to live the gospel?
- When have you witnessed the blessing of "all being edified of all" during a classroom discussion?

Getting Your Class to Participate

If your class is not accustomed to participating, you will need to be patient after asking a question and wait for your students to respond. The silence may feel uncomfortable at first, but don't give in. As you give students time to ponder your questions, the Spirit will witness to them, and they will feel prompted to share their impressions with the class. It is also important that when students do respond, you acknowledge each one's comments in a kind and loving manner, which will encourage more participation. You might use phrases that compliment and encourage each student who participates, such as "Thank you for sharing that with us," "Thank you for going first," "That's a very good point," "I hadn't thought of that," and so forth. As you actively listen to your students' responses and then sincerely acknowledge each one, you will create an environment in which even those who are timid or new to the gospel will begin to participate.

Wherever you are in your development as a teacher, if you are open to the inspiration of the Spirit, Heavenly Father will help you grow in your capacity to teach. As you reflect on the principles taught here, you will feel the promptings of the Spirit instructing you on how to apply these principles in your teaching. Remember, the Spirit is the real teacher and will instruct us individually according to our needs. ■

NOTES

1. *The Lord Will Multiply the Harvest* (satellite broadcast address to religious educators in the Church Educational System, Feb. 6, 1998), 5–6.
2. *Teaching by the Spirit* (2000), 12, 15; emphasis in original.
3. See Jonn D. Claybaugh and Amber Barlow Dahl, "Increasing Participation in Lessons," *Ensign*, Mar. 2001, 34.

The Relief Society Lesson That Changed Our Family

Have you ever wished there was a simple, miraculous way to protect your family from the evil influences that attack on every side?

NAME WITHHELD

I noticed a gradual change in our son Jacob's attitude his first year of junior high school (names have been changed). He was a good young man, but he became rude and rebellious at times. He seemed obsessed with television, video games, and the Internet. He fought us continually over doing his homework, keeping his room clean, and helping around the house. I had seen the same thing happen with our older children as they became teenagers, but I felt this was more serious. I knew from painful personal experience how some children turn away from the Church as they grow up. I fervently prayed to know how to protect our youngest son and our whole family from the evil influences in the world.

I certainly didn't expect a miracle that Sunday in November as I sat down at the back of the Relief Society class. Sister Randall, a counselor in the Relief Society presidency, announced that the lesson topic was scripture study, and I was struck by a feeling of weary guilt as I thought of my own family. "Not another lesson on scripture study," I thought. "I'm doing the best I can."

My husband is a good husband and father who has always loved his family dearly, but he couldn't be bothered with family scripture study. We had prayer with the children, and we tried to hold family home evening regularly. But whenever I suggested family scripture study, he

refused to consider it. Because I felt it was so important, I read the scriptures with each of my children at night before tucking them into bed. I didn't know what more I could do.

Lately, however, whenever I came in to read scriptures with Jacob, more often than not he said: "Oh, not now. I'm too tired [or busy or whatever; he had a hundred excuses]. I'll read them by myself." Whenever we didn't read scriptures together and I'd ask about it the next morning, he would always say he had somehow "forgotten" to do it. I wondered how far to push scripture study when he could hear his father watching television in the other room.

As Sister Randall began her lesson, I expected to hear yet another story of how a "perfect family" enjoys scripture study. Instead, Sister Randall began telling a story from the Old Testament: "Numbers 21 tells about fiery serpents attacking the Israelites as they journeyed toward the promised land. Many people were bitten by the serpents and died. Seeing the terrible destruction, the Israelites repented and asked Moses to pray for the Lord to take the serpents from them and to heal them."

In my mind's eye I visualized our family journeying through life and suddenly being attacked by fiery serpents in the form of our own latter-day vipers: crime, drugs, pornography, immorality. I felt as helpless as the Israelites.



Whenever I suggested having family scripture study, my husband refused to consider it. Because I felt it was so important, I read the scriptures with each of my children at night before tucking them into bed.



On New Year's Day my husband began to lead us in daily scripture study. Over time I was amazed at how much our home atmosphere improved.

Sister Randall explained how the Lord told Moses to make a brass serpent (symbolic of Christ) and put it on a staff. Then Moses promised the people that anyone who had been bitten by a serpent had only to look at the brass serpent and he or she would live. Despite the simplicity of this promise, Alma tells us that “there were many who were so hardened that they would not look, therefore they perished. Now the reason they would not look is because they did not believe that it would heal them” (Alma 33:20).

Sister Randall told us that although in our day the fiery serpents take a different form, we too can look to Christ and be saved. In our day prophets have told us to read our scriptures daily, both personally and with our families; to have personal and family prayers; to attend our meetings; to pay tithing; to repent; to be worthy to attend the temple; and to have family home evening. This is our way to look to Christ and be healed.

At first the simplicity of the concept seemed too easy to protect us from life's daily temptations. But as Sister Randall talked, my heart was touched, and I felt the Lord speaking to me through her. I realized it

was simply a matter of faith. Did I believe the words of today's prophets and apostles, or would I turn away, as many Israelites turned away from the brass serpent?

I went home from church determined to help my family be strengthened by family prayer and scripture study. I prayed for weeks that my husband would soften his heart. I fasted. I had a special family home evening and invited our less-active married son and his family to join us. We learned about Moses and the fiery serpents. Finally, one night I asked my husband if we could begin the new year by studying the scriptures as a family. And on New Year's Day he began to lead us in daily scripture study.

Our family didn't become perfect overnight, but I was amazed at how much our home atmosphere improved. We had less contention and a sweeter spirit in the home. I didn't lose my temper or get discouraged nearly as often. I felt a closeness to my husband and to the Lord that astonished me. It was Jacob's attitude, however, that changed the most. He began to remind us all that we must have family scripture study, and he willingly took his turn to read.

I realized anew the wisdom of following the prophets and relying on their promises. I have a testimony of the truth of these words from President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency: “It often takes a superhuman effort for parents of a busy family to get everyone out of bed and together for family prayer and scripture study. You may not always feel like praying when you finally get together, but it will pay great dividends if you persevere.”¹ ■

NOTE

1. “Enriching Family Life,” *Ensign*, May 1983, 41.

PUTTING MY MARRIAGE

BY IRENE EUBANKS

Like any couple, my husband and I have had disagreements during our marriage. But one incident stands out in my mind. I no longer recall the reason for our disagreement, but we ended up not speaking at all, and I remember feeling that it was all my husband's fault. I felt I had done absolutely nothing for which I needed to apologize.

As the day went by, I waited for my husband to say he was sorry. Surely he could see how wrong he was. It must be obvious how much he had hurt my feelings. I felt I had to stand up for myself; it was the principle that mattered.

As the day was drawing to a close, I started to realize that I was waiting in vain, so I went to the Lord in prayer. I prayed that my husband would realize what he had done and how it was hurting our marriage. I prayed that he would be inspired to apologize so we could end our disagreement.

As I was praying, I felt a strong impression that I should go to my husband and apologize. I was a bit shocked by this impression and immediately pointed out in my prayer that I had done nothing wrong and therefore should not have to say I was sorry. A thought came strongly to my mind: "Do you want to be right, or do you want to be married?"

As I considered this question, I realized that I could hold onto my pride and not give in until he apologized, but how long would that take? Days? I was miserable while we weren't speaking to each other. I understood that while this incident itself wouldn't be the end of our marriage, if I were always unyielding, that might cause serious damage over the years. I decided it was more important to have a happy, loving marriage than to keep my pride intact over something that would later seem trivial.

BEFORE MY PRIDE

I went to my husband and apologized for upsetting him. He also apologized, and soon we were happy and united again in love.

Since that time there have been occasions when I have needed to ask myself that question again: "Do you want to be right, or do you want to be married?" How grateful I am for the great lesson I learned the first time I faced that question. It has always helped me realign my perspective and put my husband and my marriage before my own pride. ■



The Book of Mormon

THE GREAT PURVEYOR OF THE SAVIOR'S PEACE

BY ELDER NEIL L. ANDERSEN

Of the Presidency of the Seventy

Before the rededication of the São Paulo Brazil Temple in 2004, the temple doors were opened to many notable leaders from government, business, and education. As I accompanied a highly respected, elected leader through the temple, I noticed that his attention was acutely focused. It wasn't until we reached a sealing room at the end of our visit that I fully understood why.

In a solemn tone he said to me: "Mr. Andersen, I want to tell you something about my family. My oldest son passed away five years ago at age 35 of cancer. In his final months he could find no peace. He was nervous, distraught, and concerned about his family, his life, and what was ahead of him. Knowing of my son's situation, a friend of mine who is a member of the Church shared with me a copy of the Book of Mormon and suggested I share it with my son.

"It was a miracle to me to see the effect of that book on my son. He devoured it. He wrote notes and thoughts in the margins. His concerns and anxieties disappeared. In reading the Book of Mormon he found enormous peace. When he died, the book was next to him. I am so

thankful for the peace it brought to him."

We live in that time long prophesied when peace would be taken from the earth: "And in that day shall be heard of wars and rumors of wars, and the whole earth shall be in commotion, and men's hearts shall fail them" (D&C 45:26). We speak not only of the conflict of nations but also of the pace and frenzy of modern cities, the distraction of media and technology, the obsession with material possessions, the uncertainty of economic stability, and the turbulence of shifting values. We thirst for peace.

The words of the Savior are so inviting: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Do you desire more peace in your life and for your family? Would you change something you are doing in your life if you could have more of the Savior's peace?

The Book of Mormon is a wellspring of peace to the thirsty soul. It is a great purveyor of the Savior's peace. The introduction to the Book of Mormon explains that the book tells us what we must do "to gain *peace* in this life and eternal salvation in the life to come" (emphasis added).



We need only approach the Book of Mormon prayerfully and with faith, and the Savior's peace will permeate our searching.

From the beginning to the end of the Book of Mormon, “we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, . . . that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.”

Counting the ways the Book of Mormon brings peace to the soul is like counting the sand on the seashore. Let me discuss a few of the ways, allowing you to multiply the list by your own experience.

Peace from Faith in Jesus Christ

From the beginning to the end of the Book of Mormon, “we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, . . . that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26). More than half of the verses in the Book of Mormon refer to or speak of the Savior.¹

Each year, often at Easter and Christmas-time, news magazines across the world ask the

questions: Who was Jesus Christ? Did He live? Are the writings in the Bible authentic?² Yet we know that the Bible is correct. Mormon declared, “This [the Book of Mormon] is written for the intent that ye may believe that [the Bible]” (Mormon 7:9).

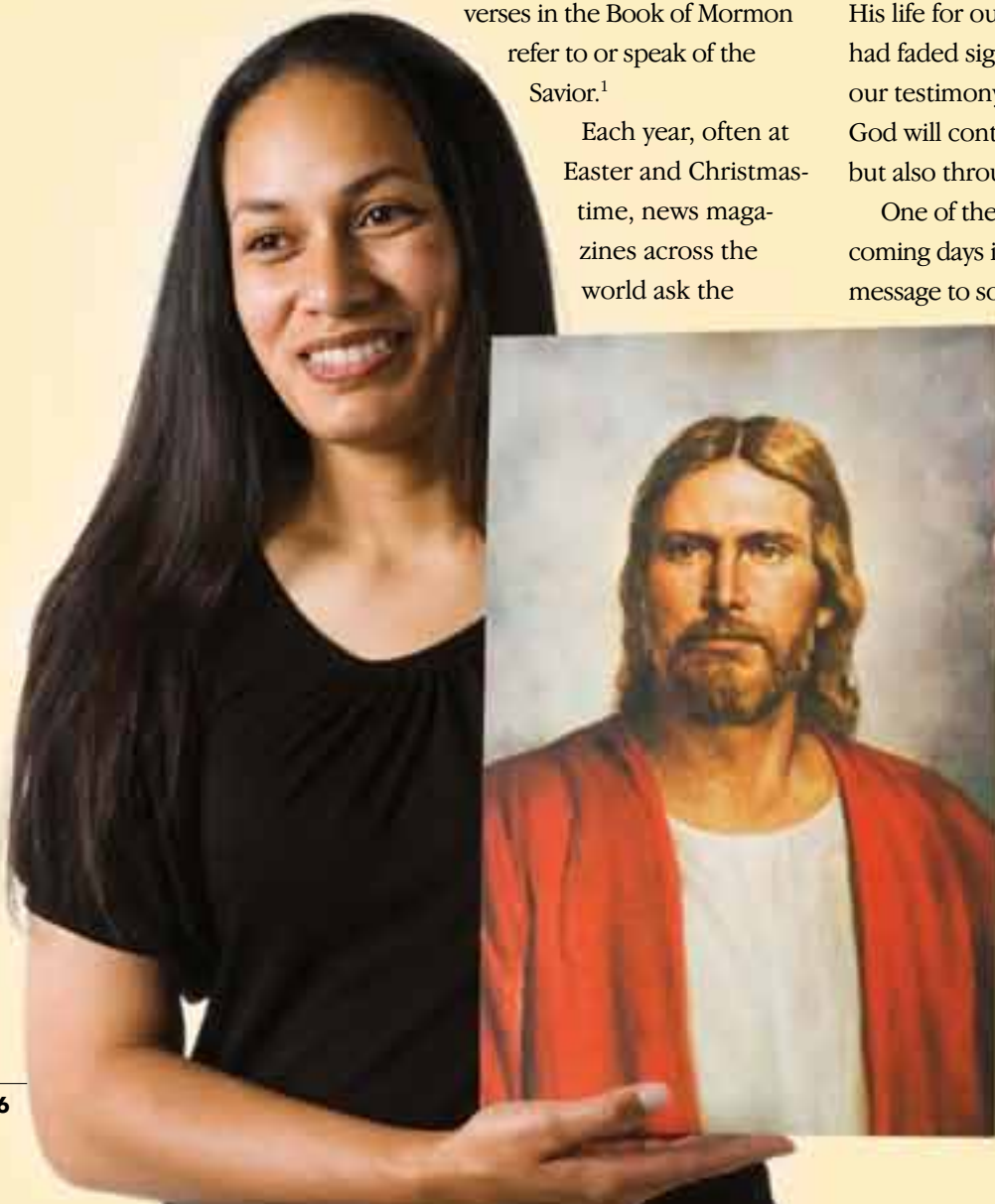
When I was a missionary in Europe in the early 1970s, we began much of our teaching with the Apostasy because the divinity of Christ was widely accepted. When I returned as a mission president 20 years later, the emphasis of our teaching changed because belief in Jesus as the Son of God, who gave His life for our sins and rose the third day, had faded significantly. The importance of our testimony of Jesus Christ as the Son of God will continue to grow not only in Europe but also throughout the world.

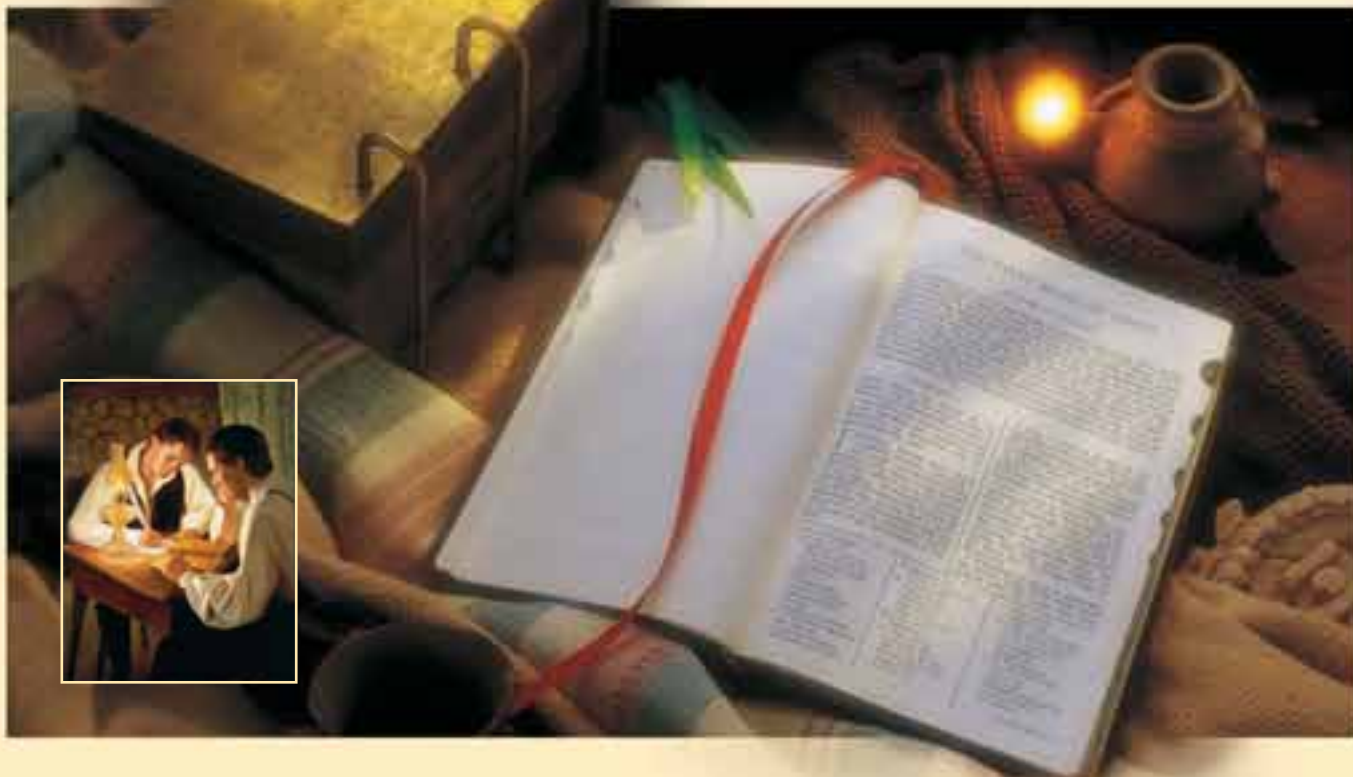
One of the blessings of our day and the coming days is that we are able to take our message to so many who know little about

Jesus Christ and His mission. The assurance of Christ fills the Book of Mormon, bringing in its wake abundant peace to all who embrace it.

In the chapters that anticipate the Messiah, we learn of His purposes, His promises, and His healing power. We learn of the prophecies concerning His life and the miracles in the Americas at the time of His birth.

In His resurrected state He declared, “Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world” (3 Nephi 11:10). We feel His love for us: “I have





The Book of Mormon is a physical manifestation of the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy” (3 Nephi 17:7). “Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full” (3 Nephi 17:20). We see Him in His majesty as our Redeemer, the King of kings.

From this witness of the Book of Mormon, confirmed by the Spirit, flows an indescribable spiritual peace, assuring us that He is truly “the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25) and that our eternal peace will be with Him.

The Peace of a Testimony of the Restoration

The Book of Mormon is a physical manifestation of the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The book is in our hands. We can touch it. We can read it.

How could anyone believe that Joseph Smith could write such a book? His wife, Emma, recorded: “Joseph . . . could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon. And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, it is marvelous to me, ‘a marvel and a wonder,’ as much so as to any one else.”³

No explanation about the origin of the Book of Mormon, excepting Joseph Smith’s own account (see Joseph Smith—History 1:29–60), has exhibited any credibility.

Honest men willingly testified of holding the plates and being shown them by an angel of God—a witness they never denied. More important, the Book of Mormon comes with a promise that as we sincerely ask God, with faith in Christ, He will manifest the truth of it unto us by the power of the Holy Ghost (see Moroni 10:3–5).

This witness of the Book of Mormon confirms “that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, that Joseph Smith is his revelator and prophet in these last days, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s kingdom once again established on the earth, preparatory to the second coming of the Messiah” (introduction to the Book of Mormon).

I have seen the power of the Book of Mormon in bringing a testimony of the Restoration to thousands across the world. I have heard the experiences in numerous languages, seen the devotion in divergent cultures, and stood amazed at the consistency of the peace the Book of Mormon brings. It truly is “a marvelous work and a wonder” (2 Nephi 25:17).

The first time I experienced the power of the Book of Mormon in the life of a convert, I was serving as a missionary in France. My British companion and I spent much of our time knocking on doors—with few results. One afternoon a distinguished middle-aged lady opened her door. She had little time for us that day, but we left a Book



Parley P. Pratt said, “As I read, the spirit of the Lord was upon me, and I knew and comprehended that the book was true, as plainly and manifestly as a man comprehends and knows that he exists.”

of Mormon and made an appointment to return two days later. When we returned to her apartment and the door opened, I felt a powerful spiritual feeling. She was eager to see us. She had been reading the book and had experienced the powerful feelings of the Holy Ghost. She spoke of her joy and peace. She was prepared for whatever course we as the Lord’s servants would invite her to take.

It was in the cold of February. Our city had no chapel, so we installed a portable baptismal font in an old wooden barn. The steam from the warm water filled the air. The humble members of the branch surrounded the portable font as this sister climbed up the stairs and then down into the water to be baptized a member of the Church.

The peace expressed by this wonderful sister echoed the words of Parley P. Pratt (1807–57) as he spoke about his first encounter with the Book of Mormon: “As I read, the spirit of the Lord was upon me, and I knew and comprehended that the book was true, as plainly and manifestly as a man comprehends and knows that he exists.”⁴

With the assurance of this testimony, we enter the Church and take courage in the promises and responsibilities of our covenants. Our testimony of the many principles of the gospel grows throughout our earthly experience, but it is often the Book of Mormon that first brings us the settling peace of knowing that the gospel and the priesthood have been restored. It is a foundation upon which we build.

The Peace of the Pure Doctrine of Christ

With trouble arising among his people, the prophet Alma determined to “try the virtue of the word of God,” which had a “more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else” (Alma 31:5).

The true doctrine of Christ, received with faith, changes our souls and brings us peace.

The Lord Himself said the Book of Mormon contains “the fulness of my everlasting gospel” (D&C 27:5; see also D&C 42:12). The Book of Mormon unveils the plan of salvation and “answers the great questions of the soul.”⁵

The lessons of truth in the Book of Mormon are taught in the difficult circumstances of war and oppression, in the sermons of prophets, in the conversations of fathers to sons, and in the Savior’s own words. There is a central theme: “God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people” (Mosiah 15:1). There are those who are seeking: “And I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God” (Enos 1:2). There is the constant call to leave our sins behind and step to a higher level: “And it came to pass that I was three days and three nights in the most bitter pain and anguish of soul; and never, until I did cry out unto the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy, did I receive a remission of my sins. But behold, I did cry unto him and I did find *peace* to my soul” (Alma 38:8; emphasis added). And there are the comforting and peace-filled words of the Savior: “Will ye not now return unto me . . . that I may heal you? . . . If ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive” (3 Nephi 9:13–14).

The Book of Mormon gently passes its stories and testimonies before us. As we ponder them and pray about them, the Lord reveals to the quiet chambers of our hearts our own need to repent and change. As we covenant with the Lord and make changes in our lives, we feel the power of His Atonement and confirming peace. As our spiritual journey progresses, we feel strengthened by His grace as we confront the difficulties and disappointments of life.

An Apostle has said, “When we want to speak to God, we pray. And when we want Him to speak to us, we search the scriptures.”⁶

This is the peace of the true doctrine of Christ found in the Book of Mormon.

The Peace of Our Family

In the commotion, busyness, and uncertainty of our lives, our families yearn for peace. We need our homes to be places of refuge, places of calm, places of truth.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has given a beautiful promise as we read the Book Mormon: “Without reservation I promise you . . . there will come into your lives and into your homes an added measure of the Spirit of the Lord, a strengthened resolution to walk in obedience to His commandments, and a stronger testimony of the living reality of the Son of God.”⁷ Surely these are promises of great peace that we need in our families.

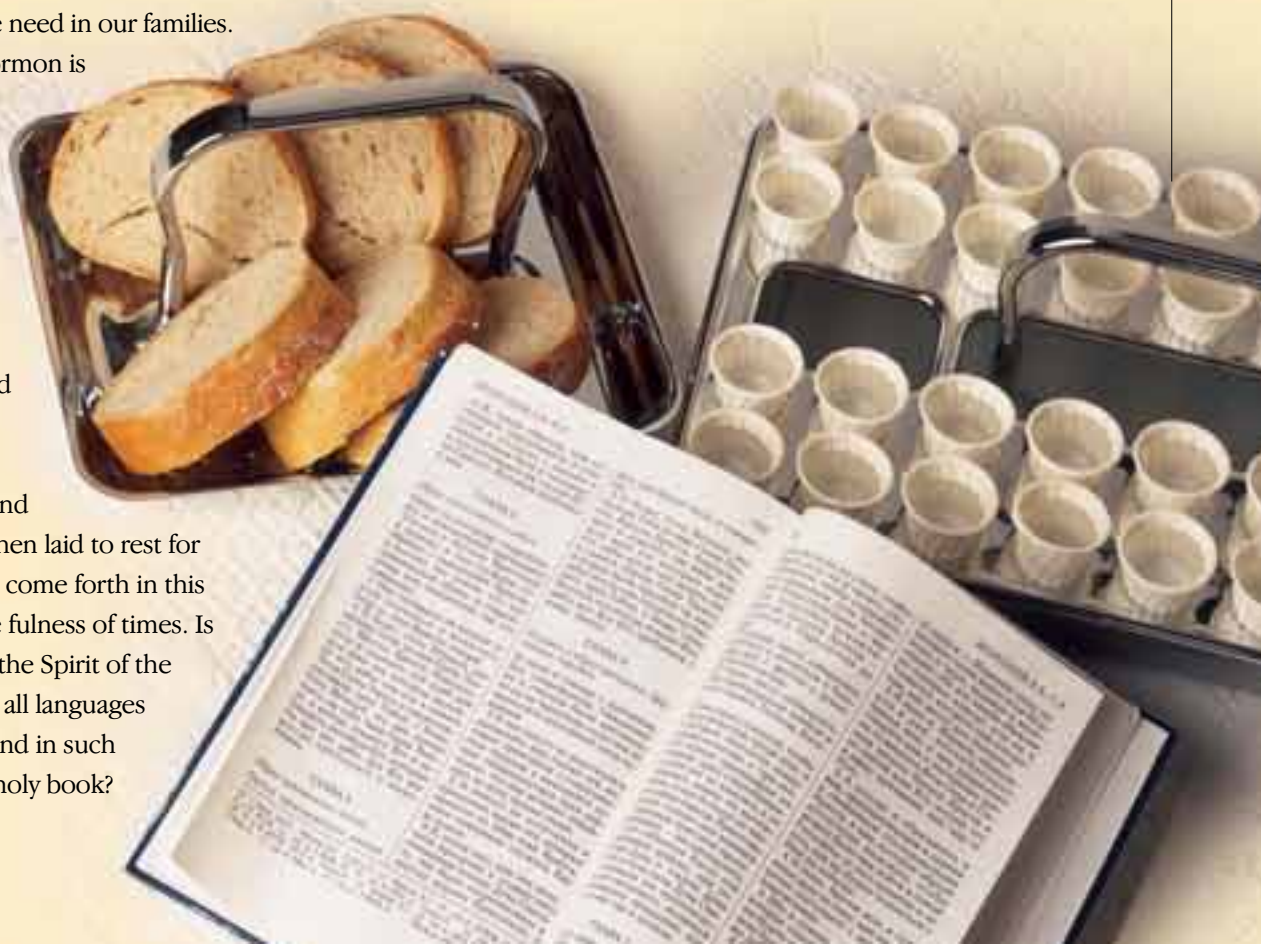
The Book of Mormon is a remarkable spiritual history. The words of prophets were passed down through the centuries from father to son, guarded and preserved through difficulty and war, brought together and summarized, and then laid to rest for centuries, finally to come forth in this dispensation of the fulness of times. Is it any wonder that the Spirit of the Lord, transcending all languages and cultures, is found in such abundance in this holy book?

The promise of comfort and peace is nestled in every chapter and verse of the Book of Mormon. We need only approach this book prayerfully and with faith, and the Savior’s peace will permeate our searching. ■

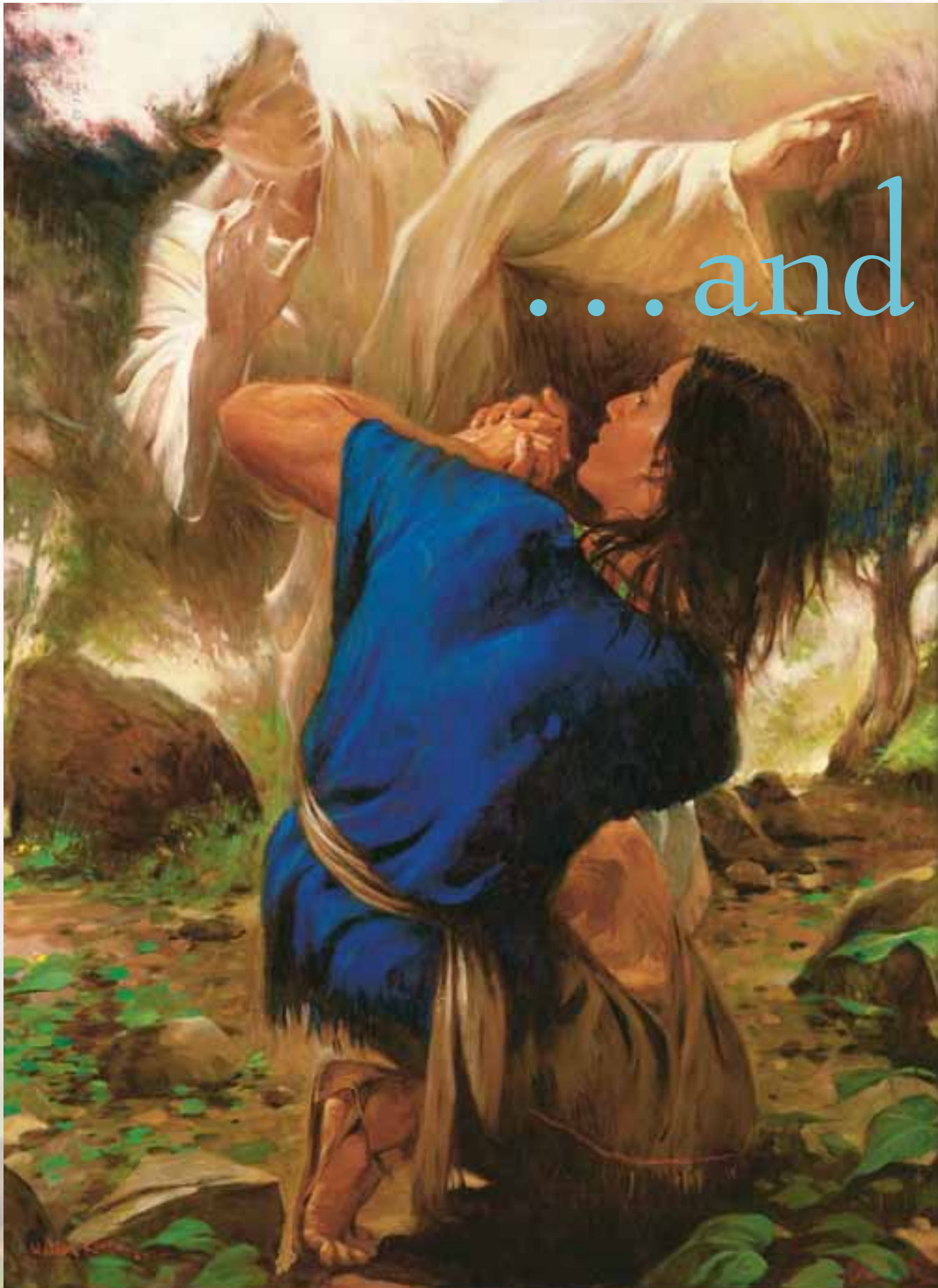
NOTES

1. See Ezra Taft Benson, “Come unto Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 83.
2. See, for example, Laurie Goodstein, “Crypt Held Bodies of Jesus and Family, Film Says,” *New York Times*, Feb. 27, 2007, sec. A, p. 10; Jay Tolson, “The Gospel Truth,” *U.S. News & World Report*, Dec. 18, 2006, 70–79.
3. “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints’ Herald*, Oct. 1, 1879, 290; spelling standardized; see also Russell M. Nelson, “A Treasured Testament,” *Ensign*, July 1993, 62–63.
4. *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (1938), 37.
5. Ezra Taft Benson, “Flooding the Earth with the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 5.
6. Robert D. Hales, “Holy Scriptures: The Power of God unto Our Salvation,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 26–27.
7. “A Testimony Vibrant and True,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Aug. 2005, 6.

As we covenant
with the Lord
and make
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...and 1



COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART



it came to pass

When the angel Moroni appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith in September 1823, he spoke of “a book . . . written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent” (Joseph Smith—History 1:34). The translation of these plates became the Book of Mormon.

Joseph’s mother, Lucy, wrote of the time period when Joseph was discovering the stories of the Book of Mormon for himself: “Joseph gave us some of the most amusing recitals which could be imagined. He would describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent, their dress, their manner of traveling, the animals which they rode, the cities that they built, and the structure of their buildings with every particular; their mode of warfare, and their religious worship as specifically as though he had spent his life with them.”¹

As we read the Book of Mormon today, its stories easily capture our imagination. Latter-day Saint artists have created works that strive to capture the power, excitement, and inspiration of some of the stories from the book. A few of their works are pictured here.

NOTE

1. *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor (1996), 112.



© KEN CORBETT

Far left: He Did Bring Glad Tidings to My Soul, by Walter Rane

“And behold, an angel of the Lord bath declared it unto me [Samuel the Lamanite], and he did bring glad tidings to my soul” (Helaman 13:7).

Left: Go Tell Your Father, by Jeremy C. Winborg

“I looked up, and beheld the same messenger . . . [who] commanded me to go to my father and tell him of the vision and commandments which I had received” (Joseph Smith—History 1:49).

Above: Enos, by Ken Corbett

“And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens” (Enos 1:4).

**Below: The Promised Land,
by Minerva Teichert**

"But, said [Lehi], notwithstanding our afflictions, we have obtained a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands; a land which the Lord God hath covenanted with me should be a land for the inheritance of my seed"
(2 Nephi 1:5).

**Bottom left: Lamanite Maidens,
by Minerva Teichert**

"Now there was a place in Shemlon where the daughters of the Lamanites did gather themselves together to sing, and to dance, and to make themselves merry"
(Mosiab 20:1).

**Bottom right: Lehi's Dream,
by Araceli Andrade**

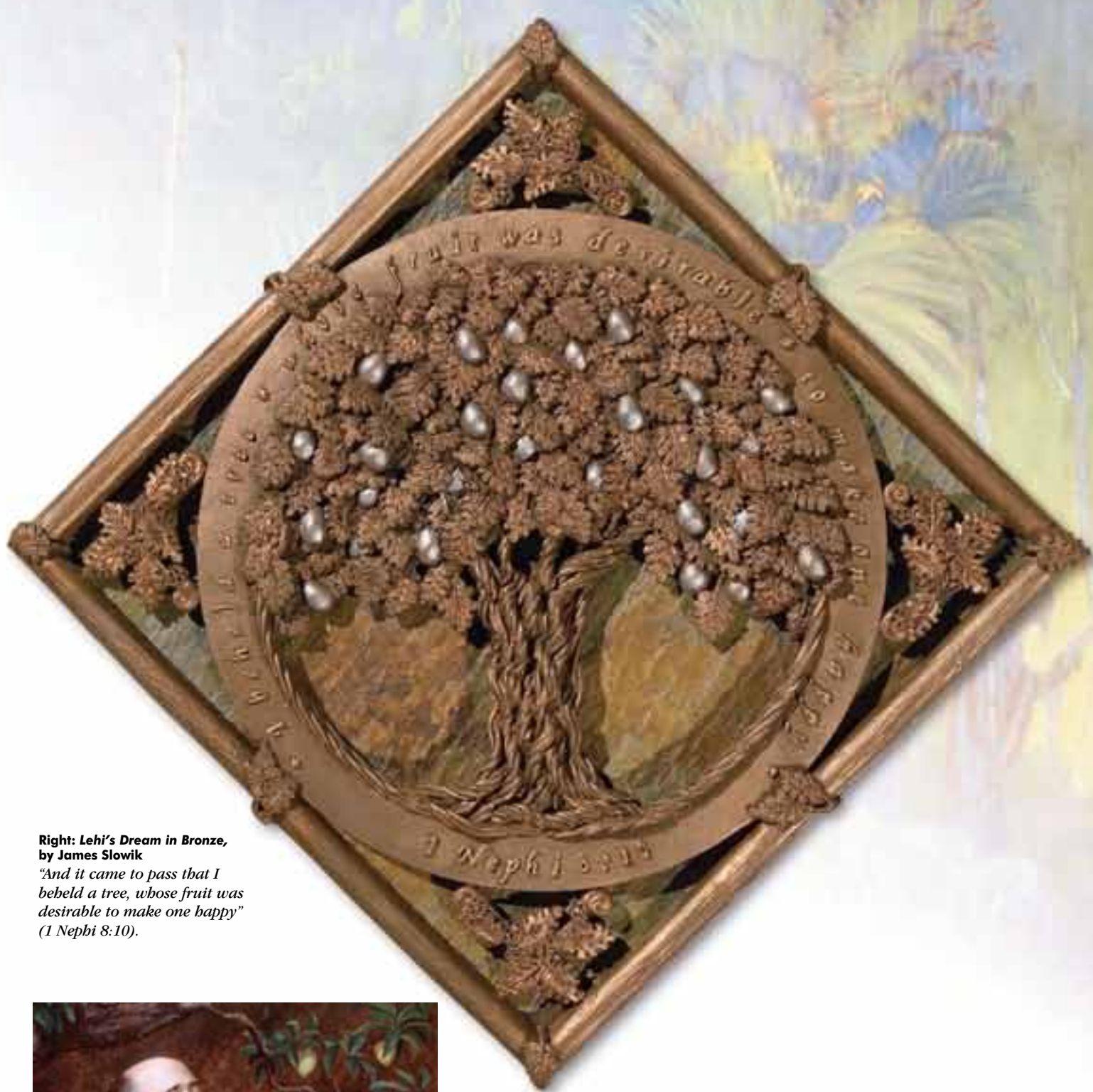
"And it came to pass that while my father [Lehi] tarried in the wilderness he spake unto us, saying: Behold, I have dreamed a dream; or, in other words, I have seen a vision"
(1 Nephi 8:2).

1950-51, OIL ON MASONITE, 35 15/16 X 48 INCHES, COURTESY OF BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART



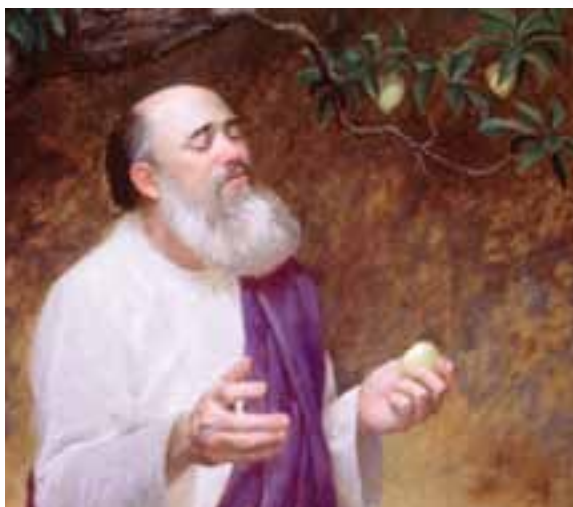
1950-51, OIL ON MASONITE, 36 X 48 INCHES, COURTESY OF BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART





Right: Lehi's Dream in Bronze,
by James Slowik

*"And it came to pass that I
beheld a tree, whose fruit was
desirable to make one happy"*
(1 Nephi 8:10).



Left: Tree of Life,
by Marcus Alan Vincent

*"And it came to pass that I did
go forth and partake of the
fruit thereof; and I beheld that
it was most sweet, above all
that I ever before tasted. Yea,
and I beheld that the fruit
thereof was white, to exceed
all the whiteness that I had
ever seen.*

*"And as I partook of the
fruit thereof it filled my soul
with exceedingly great joy;
wherefore, I began to be
desirous that my family
should partake of it also;
for I knew that it was
desirable above all other
fruit" (1 Nephi 8:11–12).*



**Left: The Waters of Mormon,
by Jorge Cocco**

"And after this manner [Alma] did baptize every one that went forth to the place of Mormon; and they were in number about two hundred and four souls; yea, and they were baptized in the waters of Mormon, and were filled with the grace of God" (Mosiab 18:16).



**Above: Their Joy Was Full,
by Walter Rane**

"And it came to pass that after we [Nephi and his brothers] had come down into the wilderness unto our father, behold, he was filled with joy, and also my mother, Sariah, and was exceedingly glad, for she truly had mourned because of us. . . .

"And when we had returned to the tent of my father, behold their joy was full, and my mother was comforted" (1 Nephi 5:1, 7).





Left: Dawn of a Promised Land,
by Frank M. Thomas

"And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did guide the ship, that we sailed again towards the promised land.

"And it came to pass that after we had sailed for the space of many days we did arrive at the promised land . . . and did pitch our tents; and we did call it the promised land" (1 Nephi 18:22–23).

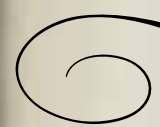
Above: Behold Your Little Ones,
by Gary L. Kapp

"And when [Christ] had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bare record of it, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

"And when he had done this he wept again;

"And he spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones.

"And as they looked to behold they cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, and they were encircled about with fire; and the angels did minister unto them" (3 Nephi 17:21–24). ■





WHY ADOPTION?



In placing their faith in the Lord as they make a truly selfless choice, many unwed birth mothers find that from the ashes of their deepest pain, He makes something beautiful—for her, the baby, and a loving family.

BY REBECCA M. TAYLOR

When Chuck and Rachael Sharp learned they would not be able to conceive a baby, Rachael thought her heart would break. She had yearned to be a mother, and she knew Chuck would be a wonderful father. For years the couple had dreamed of skiing and camping trips with their children, of noisy conversations around the dinner table, of music lessons and parties with cousins and picnics in the park. What would they do with all of those dreams?

That same year, in another city, Jessica Anderson (name has been changed) was struggling with heartbreak of her own. She had recently learned she was pregnant and the father didn't want to be involved. Her mind reeled with questions: With so little education, how would she financially support her child? How could she fill the roles of both a mother and a father? What kind of future could she provide?

Over the past several decades, societal attitudes about unwed pregnancy have changed dramatically. For most unwed mothers 30 years ago, the choice was clear: they would either marry and raise the baby, or they would

place the baby for adoption. Today, by contrast, most unwed mothers choose to either raise their babies on their own or get an abortion. In the United States, for example, only about 1 percent of unwed mothers place their babies for adoption.¹ In many other countries the percentage is almost negligible.

While Church members lag behind much of the rest of the world in the single-parent trend, more and more Latter-day Saint unwed mothers are choosing to become single parents. Yet the official position of the First Presidency remains consistent: when a successful marriage is not likely, unwed parents are encouraged to place their babies for adoption into a loving, two-parent, Latter-day Saint home (see sidebar).

Why does the Church support adoption?

What's Best for the Baby?

A popular modern catchphrase is "A family can be anything as long as there is love." Yet the proclamation on the family declares, "Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity."² Numerous studies have shown that children are better off when raised by both a mother and a father. These children are less likely to drop out of school, have behavioral problems, participate in delinquent behavior, become single mothers themselves, and live in poverty.³

In her book *For the Love of a Child*, social worker Monica L. Blume points out, "Almost every birth mother I have ever seen who is choosing to single parent believes she will be one of the very few who beat the odds."⁴ Many

FIRST PRESIDENCY STATEMENT ON ADOPTION

We . . . express our support of unwed parents who place their children for adoption in stable homes with a mother and a father. We also express our support of the married mothers and fathers who adopt these children.

“Children are entitled to the blessing of being reared in a stable family environment where father and mother honor marital vows. Having a secure, nurturing, and consistent relationship with both a father and a mother is essential to a child’s well-being. When choosing adoption, unwed parents grant their children this most important blessing. Adoption is an unselfish, loving decision that blesses the child, birth parents, and adoptive parents in this life and throughout the eternities. We commend all those who strengthen children and families by promoting adoption.”

First Presidency statement, Oct. 4, 2006



FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CHUCK AND RACHAEL SHARP

of these unwed mothers count on the father remaining fully involved or on having their own father help raise the child. And many Latter-day Saint single mothers hope to eventually get married and become sealed to their child in the temple.

Unfortunately, such hopes are not often realized. And many unwed mothers find that single parenthood is much more challenging than they expected. Studies have shown that single mothers have higher rates of illness, have less social involvement, and, if they are teenagers, are less likely to eventually marry than those who place their babies for adoption.⁵

But as Tammy Squires with LDS Family Services says, none of her clients wants to be labeled a “statistic.” These mothers feel great love toward their babies and may believe that others cannot offer the same love and care a biological parent can provide. “I try to help them see that it’s not about biology; it’s about stability and what is best for the baby,” Sister Squires explains. “Their decision will affect their child not only throughout this life but in eternity. They need to pray about it and feel peaceful about their decision, whatever that final decision may be.”

Chuck had already accepted the possibility that children would come to their family through adoption, but for Rachael, acceptance came less readily. She felt angry at God for denying her what she longed for most. One day, however, a friend spoke about adoption in a way that resonated with her. “Imagine having a baby placed

in your arms,” her friend said. “Think about looking down at that little face and knowing that child is yours. You can still be a mother!” Rachael felt the first stirrings of renewed hope in her heart.

Meanwhile, Jessica struggled with her decision. Her parents, especially her father, felt she should place the baby for adoption. Her friends encouraged her to raise the child herself. So many decisions, so many questions! Finally, she decided to get an abortion. That would make everything so much easier—wouldn’t it?

Latter-day Saint Theology and Adoption

A primary reason the Church supports adoption is that children who are adopted by temple-worthy Latter-day Saint couples can be sealed to their adoptive parents. The sealing ordinance is the capstone ordinance in the Church, and its blessings are present in this life as well as in the next. As President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) declared, children who are born in the covenant—and, by extension, those who are sealed to their parents in the temple—“have claims upon the blessings of the gospel beyond what those not so born are entitled to receive. They may receive a greater guidance, a greater protection, a greater inspiration from the Spirit of the Lord; and then there is no power that can take them away from their parents.”⁶

Fred Riley, commissioner of LDS Family Services, says that although adoption is rarely discussed in Church meetings, it is a profound gospel principle. He points out that



when the prophet Elijah restored the sealing keys, these keys encompassed adoption. And one of the ways in which Jesus Christ is our Father is through adoption, for we become His sons and His daughters when we are adopted into the family of Christ.

Additionally, Church members who are not direct descendants of Israel may be adopted into the house of Israel through their faith (see Romans 8:9; 9:4).

“From the time of Adam, adoption has been a priesthood ordinance,” says Brother Riley. “It’s a principle of the gospel that probably all of us will experience at some point as we’re literally adopted into our Heavenly Father’s kingdom.”

Rachael and Chuck started participating in the training LDS Family Services offers prospective adoptive parents. They listened to birth mothers tell their stories—birth mothers who were so different from the rebellious girls they had envisioned. Many of these young women, by contrast,

seemed wise beyond their years. Rachael and Chuck sensed some of the pain, as well as the peace, these young women had experienced. Maybe they too would one day be on the receiving end of such a sacrifice. Their excitement at the prospect of parenthood grew—as did their awe for these birth mothers.

On a warm day in late August, Jessica sat in silence as her friends drove her to a class at the abortion clinic two hours away. With every mile, her heart grew heavier and her dread increased. When they finally drew near the clinic, she told her friends, “I can’t do this.” She couldn’t take an innocent life. She would have to make a different decision.

Taking Care of Our Own?

One of the most powerful factors that influence an unwed expectant mother’s decision regarding her baby is the opinion of her parents. It can be heart-wrenching for grandparents to consider relinquishing an infant grandchild. Like their daughter, grandparents

Above: Chuck, Rachael, and Aliza Sharp on the day they were sealed in the temple. Opposite page: Aliza, alongside Rachael’s hand and the hand of her birth mother the day Aliza was placed with the Sharps. Below: Aliza’s sister, Katy, as an infant. Katy was also placed through LDS Family Services.



often bond with the baby even before birth, and they have hopes and dreams for the baby's future.

Many parents feel a grave sense of responsibility when their child becomes pregnant out of wedlock. They may feel that the most moral decision is to support their child in raising the baby rather than releasing the baby to the care of others. Church teachings about self-reliance and using family resources may seem to reinforce this belief. However, the First Presidency has addressed these concerns.

Not only does the choice to be a single parent leave the child bereft of the sealing ordinance, but its outcome can be confusing when the child is raised by extended family members. Shanna Bake of LDS Family Services explains that these children "often don't know who to call mom. Who do they listen to? Who do they go to first when they have a problem? What about discipline? It's undefined."

Some may view placing a child for adoption as "abandoning" that child. But, as Sister Bake emphasizes, adoption "is not abandoning your responsibility. It's taking *more* responsibility. It is truly taking care of your own, because you're saying, 'I can't give this child what he or she needs, but someone else can.'"

One writer expressed it this way: adoption is "not the abandonment of a baby but an abandonment of self for a baby's sake."⁷

Jessica grappled with her two remaining choices. She decided she would keep her baby, despite her father's strong feelings in favor of adoption. But then she realized that the things she valued most from growing up in her own family—a loving mother and a father with a temple marriage, the knowledge that she was sealed to her parents, financial security—were things she would be unable to provide her baby. She could give her baby love, but was love enough to raise a child? She hadn't prayed much for a while, but now she poured out her heart to Heavenly Father. The answer, when it came, was not the one she wanted, but she knew it was right.

Changes in Adoption Practice

In years past, most birth mothers who placed their children for adoption had little or no involvement in deciding who would be the parents of their children. "It was almost as if the baby went into a big black hole," says Brother Riley. Often the birth mothers were not even able to see the baby after the birth. They were left with unanswered questions:

Is my baby OK? Is she in a good family that loves and cares for her? Does he know how much I love him and why I made my decision? Does my baby know how hard it was for me?

Many adopted children faced questions of their own: What were my birth parents like? Why did my birth mother choose to let me go? Didn't she want me? What about my birth father?

Today, many of these issues have been addressed as adoptions have become more open. Usually the birth mother chooses the adoptive parents for her child, and she meets them before the birth. Together she and the adoptive family determine the type and frequency of future contact that will work best for them, whether such contact is through letters, photos, or face-to-face visits.





Sister Bake says that this type of adoption “really helps the birth mothers move on. Part of their grief comes from wondering, ‘Did I do the right thing?’ Through regular contact it’s reaffirmed: ‘Yes I did the right thing. He’s happy, he’s doing well, they love him.’ It helps them heal faster.”

Jessica couldn’t get enough of her baby.

For the past three days she had stroked little Aliza’s soft skin and hair, breathed in her baby scent, cried over her, and loved her.

Another couple would be taking her home—a couple who had all the characteristics Jessica had hoped for as she searched for her baby’s new parents. Jessica knew, deep in her soul, that Rachael and Chuck Sharp were supposed to be Aliza’s eternal parents. But for these three days, Aliza had been her baby.



Now it was time to place Aliza with her new parents. Jessica didn’t think she had ever shed more tears. Behind her sorrow, though, was the peaceful assurance that she was giving her daughter the most priceless gift she could ever give: both a mother and a father.

Beauty for Ashes


The Lord gives compensating blessings to those who sacrifice their will to His. Speaking messianically, the prophet Isaiah proclaimed, “The Lord hath anointed me . . . to give . . . beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (Isaiah 61:1, 3). In placing their faith in the Lord as they make a truly selfless choice, many birth mothers have found that from the ashes of their deepest pain, He has made something beautiful.

“Most likely this is the hardest thing these birth mothers will ever do,” says Sister Bake. “But in the end, almost all the girls I’ve worked with have said, ‘I’m a better person now—I’m stronger, wiser, and more mature.’”

Above: Chuck Sharp with his daughters. Left: The Sharp family: Rachael, Aliza, Chuck, and Katy. The Sharps say they will forever be grateful for the two birth mothers whose sacrifices enabled them to have the family they hoped, prayed, and prepared for. Below: Rachael with Aliza and Katy.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE SHARP FAMILY



**Aliza
and
Rachael
Sharp.**

SERVICES FOR UNWED EXPECTANT PARENTS

LDS Family Services provides free, confidential counseling to unwed expectant parents and their family members at their offices in the United States and Canada. Counselors help unwed parents explore options that include marriage, adoption, and single parenting. Clients do not need a bishop's referral to receive services.

If expectant parents choose to place their baby for adoption through LDS Family Services, they may select the couple they want to adopt their baby. Birth parents and adoptive couples can have as much privacy and openness as they desire.

For more information, please visit www.ldsfamilyservices.org or call 1-800-453-3860 ext. 2-1711.

Jessica has since married in the temple and is attending school, with plans to become a nurse and to have children of her own someday. She still keeps pictures of Aliza in her living room. She receives letters occasionally; she's even seen Aliza several times since the placement.

Her experiences have changed her. She's softer now; her family members tease her about her tender side. She is grateful to the baby girl who inspired her to return to church and put her

life back on the right path. She knows she made a difficult but truly selfless choice, and she draws strength from that knowledge. Her future, like Aliza's, is bright. ■

Audrey Johnson (name has been changed), who placed her baby for adoption six years ago, acknowledges that, like many birth mothers, she used to wonder how she could recover from her grief. But, she says, "I believed Heavenly Father had a plan for my baby, and if I would submit to His will and follow His guidance, He would get me through it. And He did."

She says that at times she feels a little pensive, usually around her baby's birthday. "But the overriding feeling is one of peace," she says, "I know I did absolutely the best thing I could have done for her—and for me. It turned my whole life around. And I learned that not only could I be happy again, but I could be happier than I was before."

Six years have gone by since Aliza's adoptive placement. She is now an energetic six-year-old who loves eating popsi-cles, doing art projects, and playing with her three-year-old sister, Katy, who was also placed through LDS Family Services. Her parents cherish their little family, and they can't imagine it coming about in any other way. Among the memories they treasure most are the days when Aliza and Katy were sealed to them. They will forever be grateful for the two birth mothers whose sacrifices enabled them to have the family they had hoped, prayed, and prepared for.

NOTES

1. See Anjani Chandra and others, "Adoption, Adoption Seeking, and Relinquishment for Adoption in the United States," *Advance Data*, May 11, 1999, 9.
2. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102; June 2006, 104.
3. See Maggie Gallagher, *The Age of Unwed Mothers: Is Teen Pregnancy the Problem?* Institute for American Values, 1999, 9.
4. Monica L. Blume and Gideon O. Burton, *For the Love of a Child* (2005), 79.
5. See John Cairney and others, "Stress, Social Support, and Depression in Single and Married Mothers," *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, Aug. 2003, 442, 445; Patrick F. Fagan, "Adoption: The Best Option," in *Adoption Factbook III* (1999), 4.
6. *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 2:90.
7. Curtis Young, "The Missing Piece: Adoption Counseling in Pregnancy Resource Centers," *Heartlink*, Jan. 2001, www.family.org/pregnancy/archives/a0030048.cfm.



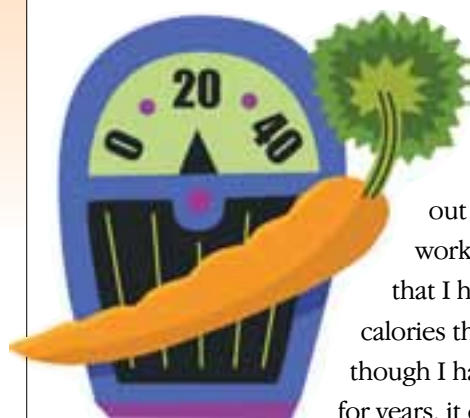
Exercising the Soul

BY MARIE E. OWENS

A few years ago I realized that I had neglected my responsibility over my physical health. I have always known that I am a cherished child of God, that He has given me talents and abilities, and that I should not define who I am in terms of my physical body. However, I had difficulty with my third pregnancy and was beginning to feel pain in my back and knees. Due to my lack of attention to how I was treating my body, I found myself 120 pounds overweight in my early 30s. I decided to try some lifestyle changes to see if I could at least slow down the process of gaining weight. I didn't think I could lose it all, and I didn't concentrate on reaching a particular dress size or number on the scale. But I did recognize that the sooner I stopped gaining, the less damage I would do to my body.

The lessons I learned on my treadmill helped me better understand physical and spiritual laws.

This journey has taken several years and continues even today. I now enjoy exercising, in part because I have felt the Spirit tutor me during this time. I have been amazed to discover that the same principles that have helped strengthen me physically are also applicable spiritually. Here are some things I have learned from my time on the treadmill.



Natural laws govern all things.

There was no way to lose weight without understanding and working within the law that I had to consume fewer calories than I burned. Even though I had ignored this law for years, it continued to be true.

The extra calories became extra weight. “When we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (D&C 130:21). Likewise, laws for our spiritual health don’t change. We can ignore them for a time, but they continue to exist and are true whether we use them for our benefit or allow them, in our apathy, to ultimately condemn us.



Pacing yields endurance.

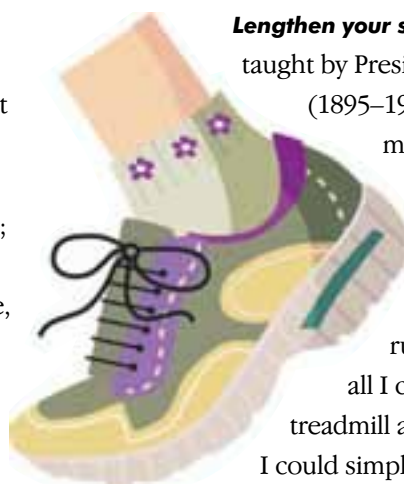
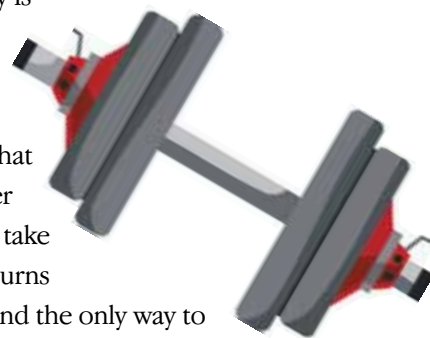
Like many others, I had tried faster and easier (and unhealthy) options for losing weight. Many already know that these do not work and often make matters worse. There is no way around the natural law; it demands that we personally

sacrifice and persevere. But we do not need to do it alone, and there is no deadline. We have been counseled by the Lord, who understands the timing of all things better than we do, to “see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength” (Mosiah 4:27).

I did not begin with the end in mind; rather, I focused

on changing my direction. As long as I stayed on the correct path and was moving forward, it did not matter how fast I was moving. In fact, pacing myself was vital in not giving up. Just as I found that I could run farther when I turned down the speed on the treadmill, we can go farther toward the kingdom of God if we do not push so hard that we feel compelled to stop our efforts for long periods of time. In this, the journey is as important as the destination.

Resistance builds strength. I soon found that scrutiny and control over my caloric intake would take me only so far. Muscle burns more calories than fat, and the only way to increase muscle is to exercise. I started slowly with nonimpact activities, 20 minutes a day. Over the course of months, I began to build both my intensity and duration. What was important was not what I did but that I did just a little bit beyond what I thought I could do—and that I did it regularly. Allowing my body to sweat and work has increased my physical strength. Likewise, working through adversity builds spiritual strength. Resistance training is the only way to build muscle—be it spiritual or physical muscle.



Lengthen your stride. I knew this counsel taught by President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) encouraged us to do

more. I used to think that meant “go faster.” But he didn’t say that. He said to “lengthen your stride,” or, in other words, run smarter. When it was

all I could do to not fall off the treadmill at a given setting, I found

I could simply take larger steps. Lengthening my stride allowed me to accomplish what I didn’t think I could.



Plateaus will happen—continue anyway. In weight-loss programs, the term *plateau* refers to the times when you are doing all of the right things but the weight loss stalls. Plateaus are common

and even expected. A variety of things change to help your physical body become healthier; a lower number on the scale is just one of them. The trick is to stick to your plan even though you are not receiving outward feedback of its effects. This is true for our spiritual growth as well. We may feel that we're not progressing—or even that we're losing ground. Sometimes the spirit needs to rebuild from within before we see the outward manifestations. Be patient and continue anyway.



Variety helps. Since this was such a slow and long process for me, I became bored with both the foods I was eating and the

workout routines I was doing. It was important for me to adjust things every once in a while to keep motivated and make the process more fun. This life is the time to be tested, but we are also to enjoy the experience. I truly believe that the Lord wants us to find happiness in our time on this earth. He wants us to explore the many possibilities and wonders around us. This variety helps satisfy the appetites of our souls.

Toning happens through correct form—not just additional repetitions. After a lifetime of being heavy, I found that there were some areas where my skin did not shrink proportionally to my body size. After losing more than 100 pounds, I needed to focus on toning. This involved slowing down and focusing on how I was working individual muscles. I am



learning, too, that we often have to slow down and focus on the fundamentals to tone spiritual attributes. Often, after going through the same motions for a time, we become so familiar that we take the movement for granted. This familiarity can lead to complacency, making the exercise less effective. Occasionally reflecting on why and how we are to live a certain principle can produce a deeper understanding and testimony of it.

Our natural state is not our best state. Even though losing the

weight was difficult, keeping it off has required just as much effort.

Every time I thought I had “made it” and could relax, I immediately began to lose ground. It soon became clear to me that my body and my spirit will not remain naturally healthy and strong without effort. “For the natural

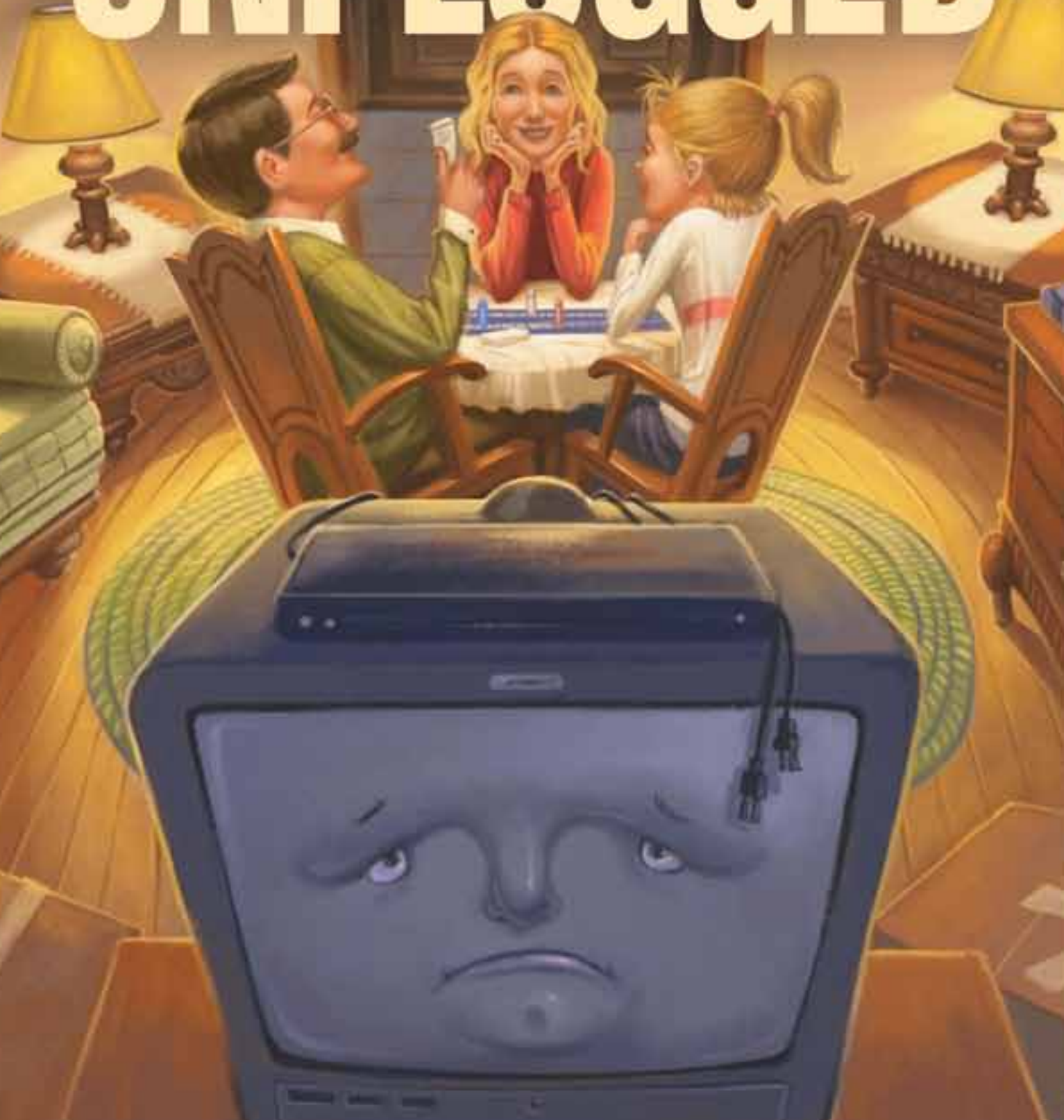


man is an enemy to God, and has been since the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man” (Mosiah 3:19). If left unmonitored and unexercised, both the body and the spirit will revert—surprisingly quickly—to a state of lethargy. In this life there is no such thing as maintaining. Our actions (or lack of them) will result in either our moving forward or falling backward.

Our souls are the union of our bodies and our spirits (see D&C 88:15). They are integrally entwined, and one cannot thrive while the other is neglected. While each of us is given a different degree of physical health in this life, it is our Heavenly Father's plan for all of us to work to improve what we have received. Both our bodies and our spirits must be nourished and exercised to be healthy and to help us reach our full potential. ■

If you or someone you know has a problem with overeating, the Addiction Recovery Program, sponsored by LDS Family Services, can help. For more information, contact the LDS Family Services office in your area or visit www.ldsfamilyservices.org.

UNPLUGGED



Going without television for a few weeks opened our eyes to what we had been missing.

BY ANNETTE CANDLAND ALGER

When we were building our new home, our electrician wired the house for a satellite dish. But he wasn't sure where to drill the hole for the cables, so he coiled them up and laid them on the rafters in the attic.

The insulation company came the next day and blew thick layers of shredded paper and fiberglass into the attic and walls of our home. The wires were deeply buried.

After we had moved in a month later, we began looking for the cables. My husband emerged from the attic covered with insulation and disappointed about his unfruitful search.

"I guess we'll have to do something else tonight," he announced.

I shrugged my shoulders, thinking of the boxes we needed to unpack and the towel rods we needed to install. There would be plenty of things to do that night without watching TV.

The next night we dusted off some of our board games and played with our daughter. I checked my watch. It was 8:00 p.m., and my favorite home decorating show was on. I was missing it. The night seemed to drag on.

For the next two weeks I spent my evenings completing half-finished projects from Relief Society enrichment nights, helping my daughter with her Young Women Personal Progress projects, writing letters to friends and missionaries, and even entering a recipe contest.

The weekend of general conference was coming up. Now more than ever we wanted to get the television hooked up so we could fully enjoy the broadcast. We finally got in touch with the electrician, who told us where we should be able to find the wires. Once again my husband scoured the attic but was still unable to locate the lines.

We listened to general conference on the radio. When

I heard Elder M. Russell Ballard speak about the sleazy and evil entrapments of the media,¹ I thought, "Maybe we shouldn't hook up the TV."

Another month went by without television. I finally read my ancestors' journals. I visited the library and read more books than I had in years. I read the current issue of the

Ensign well before the new issue arrived. I spent time visiting with my husband and daughter. I finished a quilt for my new grandchild. My husband and I did extra sessions at the temple. We made a pathway in the yard with our leftover bricks. We recommitted ourselves to daily scripture study.

I suddenly seemed to have the time to do projects I had put off for years because I thought I was too busy. Had television really robbed me of these important activities?

As I began to add the hours in my head, I realized the price I had paid. The television stayed off during the daytime hours, but it usually remained on the rest of the night. At four hours a day for six days a week, we watched 24 hours of television each week. At the age of 54, I had spent almost eight years of my life watching television. Eight years!

After I discovered this, one of my married sons said he thought he could find the cables. He rummaged around in the attic and reappeared triumphant, calling out: "I found them. I found them!"

I quickly reflected on my TV-free life for the past two months. My health had improved because I got the sleep I needed. My relationship with my family had improved because I was spending more time with them. My spirituality had increased because I was doing activities that invited the Spirit.

My husband and I looked at each other and arrived at an instant agreement: "Bury those wires!" ■

NOTE

1. See "Let Our Voices Be Heard," *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 16–19.



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

Have family members total the hours they spent last week watching television. Share the story from the article. Ask family members what things they wanted to do last week but didn't because they didn't have time. Discuss the advantages of limiting television time.

Happily

Living within Our Means



Building on a foundation of solid spiritual and financial principles is the best safeguard against economic disaster.

Church leaders have repeatedly encouraged us to prepare ourselves temporally. Part of our temporal preparation involves proper financial management. The following accounts from Church members give helpful suggestions on how to budget, cut costs, eliminate debt, and live within our means—and how to be happy while doing so.

Be Personally Accountable

Properly employed, money can help us further the Lord's work and provide us contentment and comfort. Unwisely used, money can cause marital strife, personal frustration, and feelings of enslavement and desperation.

Some people covet money to the extent that they sacrifice everything of value—including their integrity and family relationships—while chasing the satisfaction they imagine material wealth will provide.

Given the powerful influence money has in our lives, we might think that money management would be one of the most important topics discussed in our homes and studied in our schools. But for most of us, money comes with few instructions. We earn it, count it, and spend it. The following ideas examine spiritual principles that can change the way we view earthly possessions.

The Lord has blessed us with everything we have, and He requires that we be wise and accountable for these blessings. This means that we use our resources responsibly. We need to remember that we may have earned something,



but we did so only with the life, strength, resources, and help that Heavenly Father has given us.

Korihor, an anti-Christ in the Book of Mormon, had a different idea: that “every man fared in this life according to the management of the creature; therefore every man prospered according to his genius, and that every man conquered according to his strength; and whatsoever a man did was no crime” (Alma 30:17).

In effect, Korihor is saying, “I earned it. It’s mine. I can do whatever I want with it.” His attitude is destructive in that it strips away gratitude, enflames pride, and engenders selfishness. His philosophy leads people to acquire money at the expense of things most valuable.

First and foremost a person must ask, “Am I a full-tithe payer?” The payment of tithing is our expression of gratitude

for the gifts and blessings God has provided. Then consider four differences that an attitude of responsibility can make:

1. I am responsible for how my money is earned. It should come honestly from labor and wise investment.

2. I am responsible for how my money is used. The Lord wants my money to have a positive impact—to please, gladden, strengthen, and enliven.

3. I will be cautious about incurring debt. Debt may be essential when purchasing an essential asset, such as a house, but it can destroy me when used to buy things I don’t need.

4. I will report how I use my money. I will counsel with my spouse about how we earn and spend our money, and we will counsel with the Lord in prayer regarding our finances.

Too often, financial decisions are made without considering possible implications. One way to manage money

wisely is to keep a record of expenditures and prepare a budget to guide future spending, which is more a state of mind than a piece of paper. A budget requires you to consider alternative ways of spending money before committing to a specific purchase. It also provides a way to compare benefits and costs, thus enabling you to direct spending to the greatest good.

A simple way to decide if a particular choice will increase happiness is to consider the spiritual implications. For example, an expensive car can feed your ego, but the added debt can be damaging. A comfortable, affordable family car can help create memories that last a lifetime through family outings. Money spent on a home that exceeds your needs may come at the expense of wonderful family vacations. Inexpensive board games may create shared time together at much less cost than electronic games that tend to isolate family members. Seeing past the initial excitement of a purchase to its effect on family well-being allows you to make the best possible choice.

In the end, you must define the path that's best for you and your family. By including the principle of stewardship in your thinking, you can add a spiritual dimension to your moneymaking decisions.

Jim Jenkins and Jerry Borrowman, Utah

Control Spending

Living within our means requires responsibility. Often owning more, acquiring more, and spending more only obligates us further, yet we still find ourselves always wanting. Following are some ideas to help keep spending down and help us live more gratefully and contentedly.



As we pay an honest tithe, we give the Lord an opportunity to open the windows of heaven on our behalf. The spiritual and financial blessings that come from tithing make it an essential part of our budget.

1. Give. Pay tithing and fast offerings, and donate usable household items to charity or to a needy family. When we fill the needs of others, our own needs are often met. After seeing what others lack, we realize that we no longer *need* certain things.

2. Use what you have. Tired of your current decor or furniture? Try painting, stenciling, refinishing, or repairing them for a fresh look.

3. Purchase used items. Shop thrift stores, garage sales, online auctions, and

classified ads, especially when buying items such as clothing and toys. Buying all of these things new can rapidly deplete income, and children quickly outgrow them.

4. Grow a garden. Plant produce that your family likes to eat, and where possible, preserve enough for the entire year.

5. Be handy. Learn how to handle household projects and make repairs. Instructional books can be helpful and may be checked out at a local library, or you can find do-it-yourself tips on the Internet.

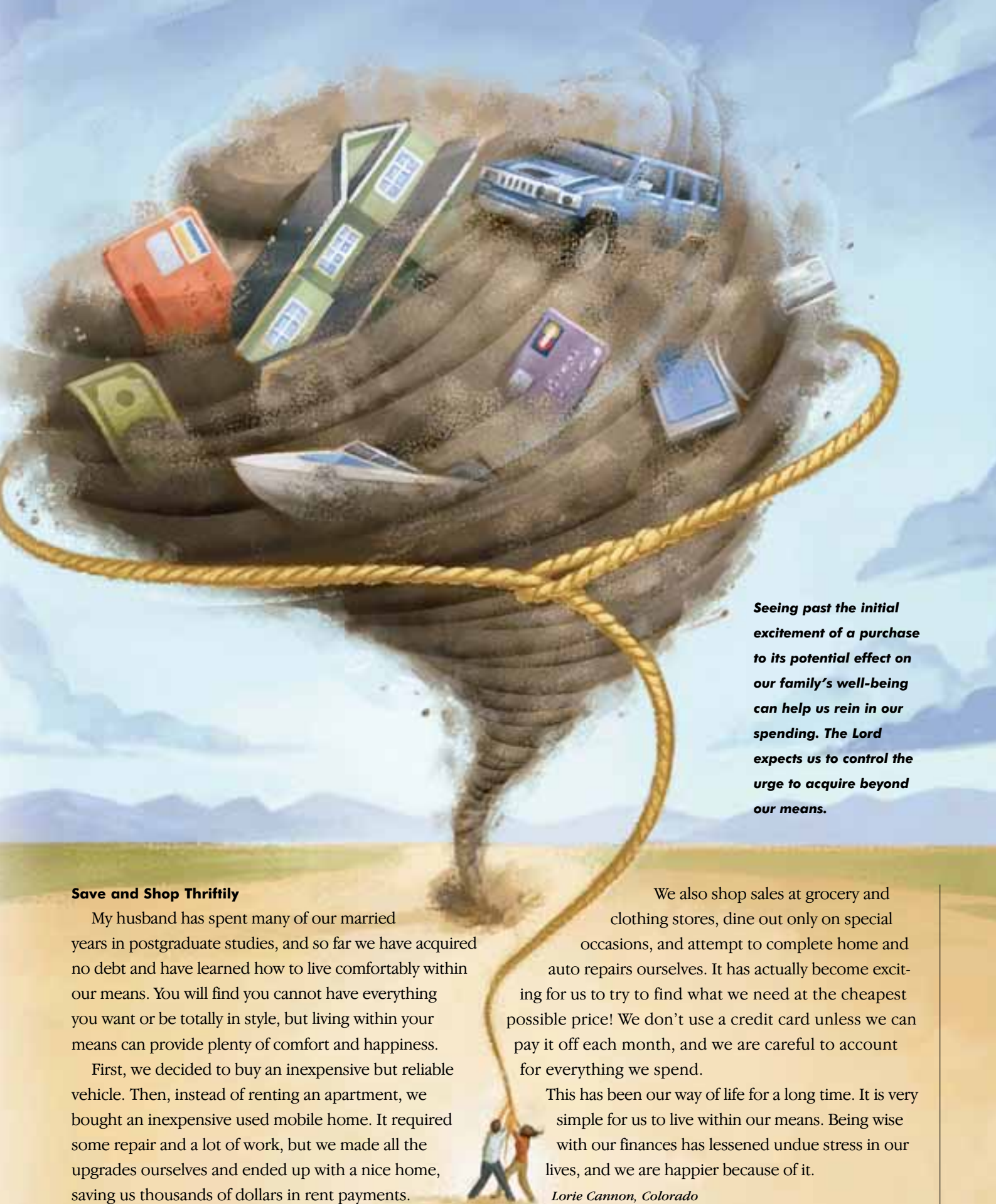
6. Pack a lunch. Instead of eating out during your lunch hour, bring prepared food from home.

7. Limit major expenses. Rather than going into debt to buy items such as a computer or furniture, be patient, save, and then buy them with cash.

8. Plan creative activities. Low-cost activities that you and your family can enjoy may include a family game night, a picnic at the park, or a movie at home. Entertainment doesn't need to be expensive.

Cutting costs involves being creative and can take some getting used to, but you will find it to be rewarding and will realize that you can be happy and content without things you once thought to be necessities.

Brian and Maralee Turner, Idaho



Seeing past the initial excitement of a purchase to its potential effect on our family's well-being can help us rein in our spending. The Lord expects us to control the urge to acquire beyond our means.

Save and Shop Thriftily

My husband has spent many of our married years in postgraduate studies, and so far we have acquired no debt and have learned how to live comfortably within our means. You will find you cannot have everything you want or be totally in style, but living within your means can provide plenty of comfort and happiness.

First, we decided to buy an inexpensive but reliable vehicle. Then, instead of renting an apartment, we bought an inexpensive used mobile home. It required some repair and a lot of work, but we made all the upgrades ourselves and ended up with a nice home, saving us thousands of dollars in rent payments.

We also shop sales at grocery and clothing stores, dine out only on special occasions, and attempt to complete home and auto repairs ourselves. It has actually become exciting for us to try to find what we need at the cheapest possible price! We don't use a credit card unless we can pay it off each month, and we are careful to account for everything we spend.

This has been our way of life for a long time. It is very simple for us to live within our means. Being wise with our finances has lessened undue stress in our lives, and we are happier because of it.

Lorie Cannon, Colorado

Avoid Financial Bondage

Financial bondage can create serious personal and family problems. The following principles will help build the skills needed for sound financial management, preparing the way for happier, more productive lives and families.

First, realize that the amount of money available for discretionary spending has little to do with numbers on a paycheck. For example, a \$30 expenditure may seem trivial when compared to a \$2,000 paycheck, but if \$1,950 is already committed to bills and other necessities, then that \$30 is more than half the discretionary budget.

Second, before going into debt, consider the results. For some expenditures, debt may be appropriate. However, the prophets have repeatedly warned against entering into unnecessary debt. I like to divide debt (and other expenses) into two categories—consumption and investment debt.

Consumption debt does not bring a financial return. Examples are recreational equipment, household furniture, and vacations. It is better to avoid this type of debt and instead pay cash for such items.

Investment debt is that which *can* bring a financial return. It may include education expenses, a car, and a house. Investment debt can be appropriate if it meets family needs and fits into your budget.

Consider major purchases for a few days before making any commitment. Be certain that they are wise and appropriate for you and your family and that you can afford them. Also consider other ways of obtaining what you need. Rentals or shared items sometimes work just as well as new, higher priced items and can save a lot of money.

Last, and most important, practice self-discipline. Just as the Lord expects us to live the commandments, He also expects us to control the urge to acquire beyond our means. This may take practice but will be rewarding in terms of your happiness, both here and hereafter.

Wise management of earthly stewardships helps prepare us for the stewardship of eternal glory in His kingdom.

Hal Lillywhite, Oregon

Plan and Budget

Some people think their financial difficulties would be solved if they could earn more money. But the truth is that most people's expenses continue to rise as income rises. The trick is to spend less than you earn.

The following steps have allowed us to live within our means and achieve our financial goals.

1. Pay a full tithe. We cannot afford to *not* pay our tithing. Many blessings, both financial and spiritual, have come to us by obeying this law.

2. Save 10 percent. Wouldn't it be nice to have saved as much as you have paid in tithing? Along with encouraging us to have a year's supply of food storage, Church leaders have also encouraged us to save enough money to live for one year.

3. Track your expenses. Document everything you spend. This helps you see where your money is going and decreases spending simply by making you aware of how you spend discretionary money.

4. Formulate monthly budgets. After we had written down our purchases for two months, we set a monthly budget for the following eight categories: groceries, food storage, children (clothes, toys, diapers), entertainment,



As we document our expenditures, we can see where our money is going and increase our awareness of how we spend discretionary income.



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Consider playing a budget game.

Give each group the same imaginary monthly salary. On a board, create a list of family “needs” in one column and family “wants” in another. Let the groups decide where to spend their money using the two lists. Discuss the results.

2. Consider making a family budget plan with all family members included in understanding how the money is spent and in deciding how to spend any extra income.

way we do this is by having our utility bills averaged throughout the year so that costs are equal every month.

6. Plan ahead. To assist us in our efforts to equalize our monthly spending, we have a list of expenditures that occur once or twice a

health, home, gasoline, and miscellaneous (haircuts, gifts, postage, and so forth). We then documented the amount spent in each category and subtracted it from the budget.

One suggestion to help control spending is to put the budgeted amount of cash in an envelope for each category. That way, when the envelope is empty, you can't spend anymore!

5. Equalize expenses. Because our income is the same each month, we try to keep our expenses the same. One

year, such as car insurance and registration, vacations, and Christmas. We take the estimated amount for each of these and divide it by 12. This gives us a monthly amount to save for each of the expenses, and we set aside a separate savings account for this money.

7. Practice making payments before taking on future obligations. Before we bought our home, we practiced making our new house payment by putting the difference between our future mortgage and our current rent into a savings account.

This helped us see that we could make our payments without further tightening our budget.

8. Avoid using credit cards. As an alternative, a debit card gives the convenience of a credit card without the pitfalls. It prevents you from spending money you don't have because it comes directly from your checking account.

9. Finally, evaluate your wants and needs. Sometimes what you think you need can wait until later, or you'll eventually realize you don't need it at all. It isn't easy to forego items that might make life more enjoyable, but it is worth it when you feel in control of your money instead of letting your money, or lack thereof, control you. ■

John and Carrie Corless, California

For more ideas on financial management, see the Family Finances link at www.providentliving.org.

A home that exceeds our needs may lead us to financial bondage and come at the expense of our spiritual happiness.



Our God Truly



Our entire perspective of our worth and our destiny is altered for good when we come to understand that we are God's children and that we can become like Him.

BY ELDER DOUGLAS L. CALLISTER
Of the Seventy

In Moscow, Russia, a young sister spoke to me of her friendship with a troubled boy from a communist home. He frequently inquired of her, “Where is God?”

Men and women of all generations have asked where God is. The Prophet Joseph did so from Liberty Jail, asking, “O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?” (D&C 121:1).

The Lord often counseled the suffering Saints, “Be still and know that I am God” (D&C 101:16; see also Psalm 46:10). Even the Savior, in the concluding hours of His atoning sacrifice, cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46).

People of all ages have delighted in pitting the strength or wisdom of their gods against that of their neighbors’ gods. One of the most interesting contests took place over 2,500 years ago on Mount Carmel between the Lord of Israel, represented by His prophet Elijah, and the Phoenician god Baal, represented by his 450 prophets. How piercing was Elijah’s challenge, “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him” (1 Kings 18:21).



The heavens silently ignored the appeal to Baal’s idols. Elijah mocked, “Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened” (1 Kings 18:27). Man-made gods never fared well in the presence of real Deity.

When it was Elijah’s turn, he prayed openly, “Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant” (1 Kings 18:36).

Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice and licked up the water that was in the trench. The people fell on their faces and proclaimed, “The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.” (See 1 Kings 18:38–39.)

Is God

In their preoccupation with worshipping a powerful and respected god, ancient civilizations often fashioned multiple deities as the objects of their reverence. It didn't occur to them to have no God. That sin was left to our more sophisticated society.

Recognizing the Lord's Hand

Naturalism's explanations of the origins of life and the miracle of our bodies often appear convoluted when placed side by side with the simple truths of the revealed word and divine scripture.

With its 107 million cells, connected to the brain by over 1 million neurons, the eye is more perfect than any camera ever invented. It caused Charles Darwin to humbly admit, "That the eye with all its inimitable contrivances . . . could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest sense."¹

The Psalmist wrote, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 53:1). Such a foolish disbeliever ought to look at his hands. Seventy muscles contribute to hand movements. Much of the rest of the body is devoted to optimizing the complex function of the hand. There are no muscles in the fingers. The sole purpose of the

To observe a miracle, look at a baby's creased hand. Shortly after the child's birth, the hand will be able to grasp, curl, push, lift, sense hot and cold, respond to pain by withdrawing, heal itself, and display great strength and extraordinary sensitivity.

forearm, its muscles and bones, is to move and position the hand.

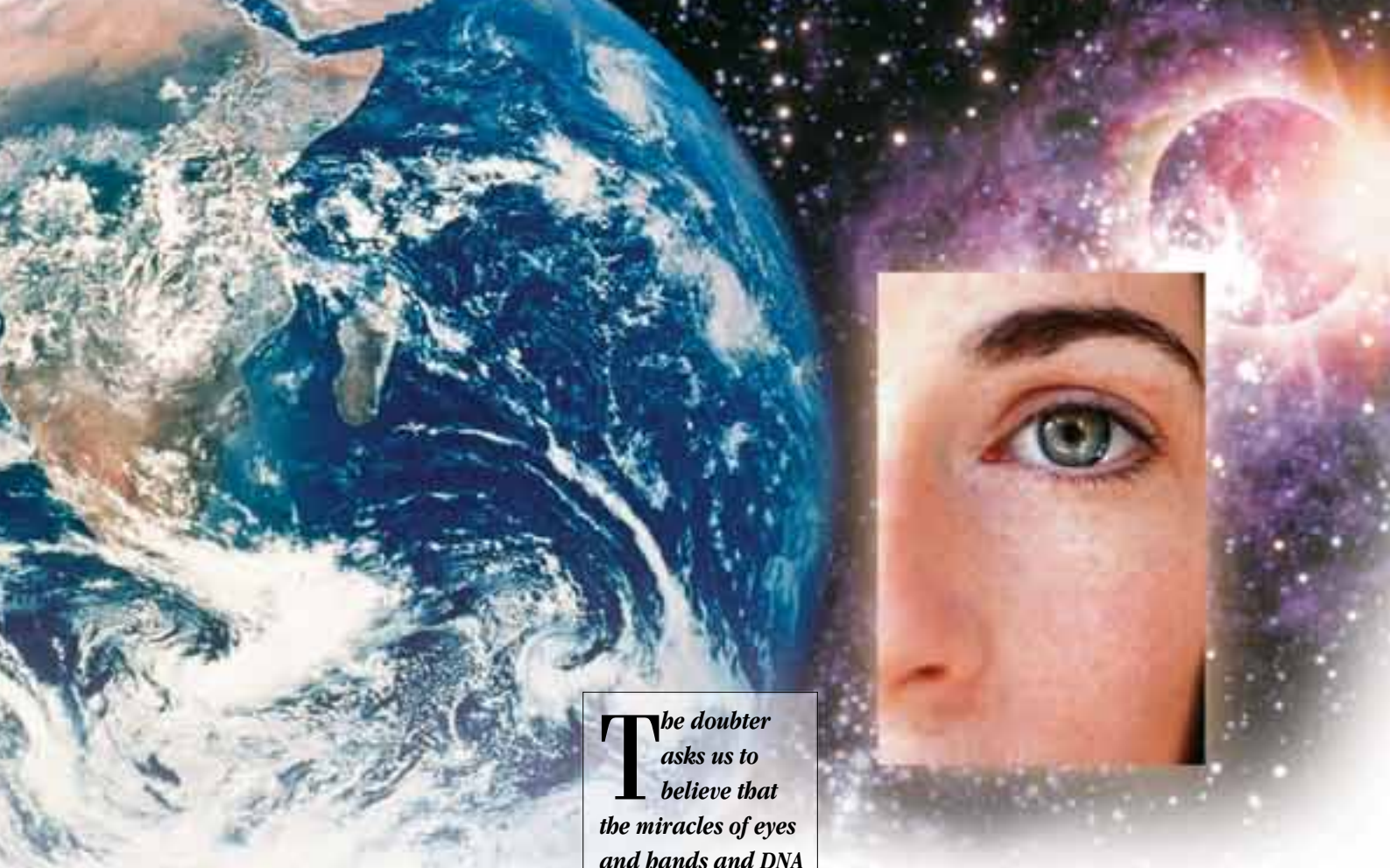
To observe a miracle, look at a baby's creased hand. Its initial movements are uncontrolled. Shortly after the child's birth, the hand will be able to grasp, curl, push, lift, sense hot and cold, respond to pain by withdrawing, heal itself, and display great strength and extraordinary sensitivity. These hands will be used thousands of times each day without forethought.

Your miraculous thumb is controlled by nine individual muscles and three major hand nerves. Sir Isaac Newton is reported to have

said: "In the absence of any other proof, the thumb alone would convince me of God's existence."²

Paul Brand, renowned orthopedic hand surgeon, wrote: "We use our hands for the most wonderful activities: art, music, writing, healing, touching. Some people go to concerts and athletic events to watch the performance; I go to watch hands. For me, a piano performance is a ballet of fingers—a glorious flourish of ligaments and joints, tendons, nerves, and muscles."³

The infant Son of Man once possessed tiny hands.



The doubter asks us to believe that the miracles of eyes and hands and DNA and order in the universe all happened by chance. The passage of time is not a "cause" and provides no answers without an intelligent designer.

His hands, too, grew to accomplish their intended purposes. He used them to touch and heal the blind and infirm. His hands threw the money changers out of the temple. His hands reached upward in prayer, outward in blessing, and downward from the cross.

The fool proclaims in his heart that there is no God, but our eyes, hands, hearts, and souls unhesitatingly testify to the contrary.

One of my brothers is a physician. During medical school he was assigned to study anatomy in companionship with an agnostic. Their education eventually required that the two of them carefully examine and dissect a cadaver. They studied the incredibly complex yet harmonious systems of the body. They noted the body's power to correct its own deficiencies and to send healing antibodies to the place of injury or infection. They learned of over 150 trillion cells within the body. If set end-to-end, these cells would encircle the earth more than 200 times. Today medical students learn of more than 1 billion miles (1.6 billion km) of DNA in one human body. My brother and his fellow student learned of a brain that continually receives signals from 130 million light receptors in the

eyes, 24,000 hearing receptors in the ears, 10,000 taste buds, and hundreds of thousands of receptors in the skin, with specialized commissions to recognize touch, vibration, cold, heat, and pain. My brother and his friend became silent as they contemplated the miracle they were examining. Sensing the moment was right, my brother challenged: "Coincidence is a marvelous thing, isn't it?" His

agnostic classmate responded, "You win."

This earth departs from its orbit of the sun by only one-ninth of an inch (2.82 mm) every 18 miles (29 km). If, instead, it changed by one-tenth of an inch (2.54 mm) every 18 miles, we would all freeze to death. If it changed by one-eighth of an inch (3.18 mm), we would all be incinerated.⁴ Did this all happen by accident?

Alma spoke to us, as well as to Korihor, testifying, "Yea, and all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator" (Alma 30:44).

The doubter requires too much of us when he asks us to believe that the miracles of eyes and hands and DNA and

order in the universe all happened by chance. The passage of time, even long intervals of time, is not a “cause” and provides no answers without an intelligent designer.

The evidence of Heavenly Father’s existence is everywhere: in every newborn babe and in every system, part, and parcel of the unending and orderly universe, including our own bodies. He is evidenced in every sunset, work of art, and passage of music, all of which He has provided to gladden the heart and bring beauty to our lives. Richard Swinburne said: “God paints with a big brush from a large paintbox and he has no need to be stingy with the paint he uses to paint a beautiful universe.”⁵

It is not possible to contemplate the immeasurable vacuum and purposelessness that would exist in our lives if He were not there. We would regret the passing of every day and the passing of every loved one, knowing that neither time nor relationships could be extended. We would approach the autumn and then the winter years of life with crescendoing fear. Every day of our lives we should thank Him that He is there and that this life is not all there is.

Valuing the Agency of Man

Some ask where God is because there is pain on this earth, and He does not usually hasten to intervene. One flip-pantly approached this issue by suggesting that God ought to have made good health contagious rather than disease.⁶ However, such thinking misses the whole point of our mortal existence, which is probationary rather than paradisaical in nature.

If babies could talk and could remember their pre-earthly estate, their first utterances might express: “You came here to be tested. You agreed to that. The tests will be hard, in part because they are seldom the tests you anticipated. This is a closed-book test in that you will not

remember your premortal estate. God will not intervene and remove the tests until the close of the examination or probationary period.” That Heavenly Father does not hasten to intervene does not mean He is not there or does not love us. He has infinite respect for our agency and the purposes of earth life.

Agency is not just the right to select among good alternatives. When God granted agency, He necessarily contemplated the possibility of wrong choices. Because He knows best and esteems so highly our precious agency, He does not answer every prayer just as it is uttered. Nor does He always punish transgressors before there has been an opportunity or a space for repentance. This Divine hesitancy is to our advantage.



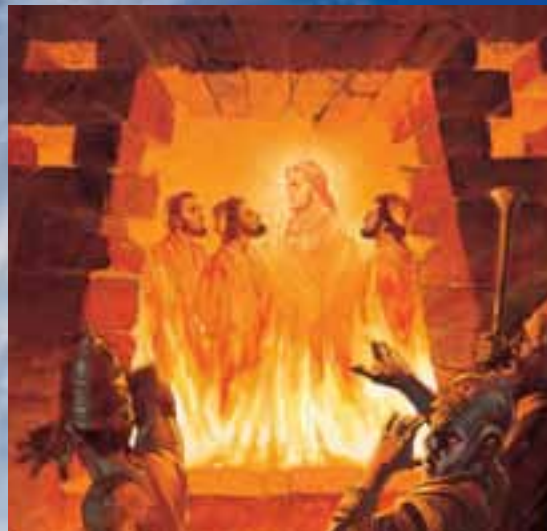
The Son of Man’s hands grew to accomplish their intended purposes. He used them to touch and heal the blind and infirm.

Understanding

Our Divine Potential

The same God who brings such order to the universe and inspires the prophets designed the time, place, and circumstances of your birth. Said the Lord to the Prophet Joseph, “Thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less” (D&C 122:9). God’s love for you and awareness of your circumstances are of equal measure. Our relationship with Him is not that of Creator and created thing. It is of personal Father and child.

I had the privilege of being present when President Gordon B. Hinckley was interviewed by editors of the *Los Angeles Times*. An editor inquired about the rapid growth of the Church. President Hinckley chose to respond by emphasizing the miraculous transformation in the life of each individual who joins the Church. He spoke of a girl in Australia who was employed serving ice cream. She seemed inattentive to the message of the missionaries until one of them said, “Do you know that you are a child of God?” She replied, “Nobody has ever



fiery furnace, heated seven times more than it was necessary to be heated, because they would worship only the true and living God. When the king, Nebuchadnezzar, saw that they were not consumed in the fire, he said to his counselors:

“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. . . . There is no other God that can deliver after this sort” (Daniel 3:28–29).
Thereby all learned that our God *is* God.

This is the true answer to the query of the lad in Moscow who asked, “Where is God?”

I know that our God is God and that He lives. I know He is our personal Father with an appointed mission for each of us to perform. I pray that we will never lose our faith, testimonies, or virtue, that we may be worthy to receive the blessings of immortality and eternal life. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University–Idaho on November 8, 2005. For the full text, please visit www.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

NOTES

1. As quoted in Bert Thompson and Wayne Jackson, *The Case for the Existence of God* (1996), 33.
2. As quoted in Paul Brand and Phillip Yancey, “The Scars of Easter,” *Christianity Today*, Apr. 5, 1985, 20.
3. *Christianity Today*, Apr. 5, 1985, 20.
4. See Bert Thompson and Wayne Jackson, *The Case for the Existence of God* (1996), 20.
5. *Is There a God?* (1996), 63.
6. See *The Works of Robert G. Ingersoll*, 12 vols. (1900), 1:73.

S*he went to
her room, got
down on her
knees, and inquired:
“Are you there? Am I
your child? Please
let me know.”*

said that to me before. I had no idea that I might be a child of God.” Thereafter she went to her room, got down on her knees, and inquired: “Are you there? Am I your child? Please let me know.” Then she said, “There came into me a surge of feeling that brought me the conviction that was the case.” She joined the Church.

Two weeks later she was asked to give a talk in a Church meeting. Her first impulse was to run from it. Then she thought, “If I am a child of God, I can do anything.” With this enlarged vision of who she was, she became a stalwart member of the Church.

Our entire perspective of ourselves, our worth, and what we can make of our lives is altered for good when we come to understand that we are God’s children and that we can become like Him.

Exercising Faith in the Living God

The book of Daniel includes the remarkable story of the three princes of Judah: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. They were cast into the midst of a burning,

Jesus Christ Taught the Purpose of Our Life on Earth



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

What Is the Purpose of Life on Earth?

President Spencer W. Kimball

(1895–1985): “Man, created in the image of God, was placed on the earth to experience mortal life, an intermediate state between premortal life and immortality.

“Our first parents, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God. By eating the forbidden fruit, they became mortal. Consequently, they and all of their descendants became subject to both mortal and spiritual death (mortal death, the separation of body and spirit; and spiritual death, the separation of the spirit from the presence of God and death as pertaining to the things of the spirit).

“In order for Adam to regain his original state (to be in the presence of God), an atonement for this disobedience was necessary. In God’s divine plan, provision was made for a redeemer to break the bonds of death and, through the resurrection, make possible the reunion of the spirits and bodies of all persons who had dwelt on earth.

“Jesus of Nazareth was the one who, before the world was created, was chosen to come to earth to perform this service, to conquer mortal death” (“The True Way of Life and Salvation,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 6).

What Can I Do to Fulfill the Purpose of My Life?

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–

1994): “When our Heavenly Father placed Adam and Eve on this earth, He did so with the purpose in mind of teaching them how to return to His presence. Our Father promised a Savior to redeem them from their fallen condition. He gave to them the plan of salvation and told them to teach their children faith in Jesus Christ and repentance. Further, Adam and his posterity were commanded by God to be baptized, to receive the Holy Ghost, and to enter into the order of the Son of God . . . , which fullness is only received in the House of the Lord” (“What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple,” *Tambuli*, Apr.–May 1986, 4; see *Ensign*, Aug. 1985, 8).

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president: “As spirit daughters of God, women ‘received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth’ (D&C 138:56) on the earth. They were among the ‘noble and great ones’

(D&C 138:55) who ‘shouted for joy’ (Job 38:7) at the creation of the earth because they would be given a physical body with the opportunity to be proven in a mortal sphere (see Abraham 3:25). They wished to work side by side with righteous men to accomplish eternal goals that neither can attain independently.

“Female roles did not begin on earth, and they do not end here.

A woman who treasures motherhood on earth will treasure motherhood in the world to come, and ‘where [her] treasure is, there will [her] heart be also’ (Matthew 6:21). By developing a mother heart, each girl and woman prepares for her divine, eternal mission of motherhood. . . .

“In my experience I have seen that some of the truest mother hearts beat in the breasts of women who will not rear their own children in this life, but they know that ‘all things must come to pass in their time’ and that they ‘are laying the foundation of a great work’ (D&C 64:32–33)” (“A ‘Mother Heart,’” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2004, 76). ■



Why Was I Awake at 3:00 a.m.?

By Stan Byrd

I thought at first that my wife, Eva, had nudged me. But as I turned over, I could see that she was still asleep. As I sat up, I had the distinct impression that I needed to go to the living room. I slipped out of bed and headed down the hallway.

Checking the children as I passed their bedrooms, I could see that they were sleeping soundly.

In the living room, a comforting warmth radiated from our coal-burning stove, which was burning the evening's load of coal. The

damper was set correctly, and the furnace seemed to be working properly. Everything looked normal. Even our dog was sleeping, oblivious to my presence. Outside, I saw only motionless shadows lying across a snow-covered yard.

As I again looked around the room, I was perplexed. The impression I had was real. So why was I standing alone in the living room at 3:00 a.m.? I

As I looked around the room, I was perplexed. The impression I had was real. So why was I standing alone in the living room at 3:00 a.m.?

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DANIEL LEWIS; PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILY LESHMAN

lingered for a few minutes but finally decided to return to bed.

Just as I started for the bedroom, I heard a metallic *swoosh* sound behind me. I quickly turned around to see smoke and hot cinders billowing from the back of the stove! A rivet on the stovepipe had suddenly snapped, and a section of the pipe had slid down into another section, leaving a gaping hole in the pipe.

I called to Eva for help. Then I quickly donned a pair of heavy leather gloves that I kept near the stove and squeezed the stovepipe seam back together. After reconnecting the pipe piece, I joined Eva in clearing the smoke from the living room. We then surveyed the damage.

Cinders and soot had burned only a small section of carpet. Had I not been there when the pipe rivet snapped, the whole living room would have been quickly engulfed in flames. The likely destruction of our home and the possible loss of our lives had been averted—thanks to a gentle but indelible impression from the Holy Ghost.

Returning to bed, I was grateful that a loving Heavenly Father, who is over all things, would warn me about a small metal rivet that would fail on that cold winter night. ■

How Could I Get to Church?

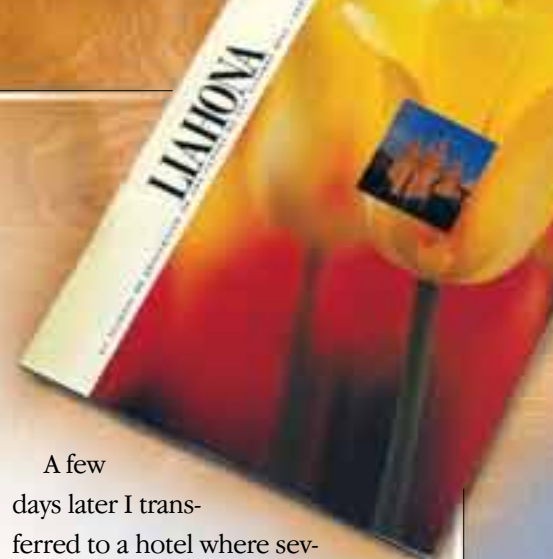
By Alberto Bocca

In 1997 I found myself on what was supposed to be a 10-day working assignment in La Victoria, Venezuela. When I realized that I wouldn't be returning home to Italy as soon as I expected, I began looking for a Latter-day Saint chapel so I could go to church on Sunday.

One day at lunchtime I made friends with a young Italian engineer who knew where to find a chapel in Maracay. He made a map for me. I had a car at my disposal, but unfortunately I hadn't yet taken the medical examination required to obtain temporary permission to drive.

I was new to the area, I had only a sparse knowledge of Spanish, and several people had advised me against taking public transportation alone. I faced a dilemma. As Easter Sunday approached, I really wanted to renew my covenants by partaking of the sacrament. If I didn't drive, how could I attend church in Maracay? If I did drive, I risked being stopped for driving without a permit.

As I considered my options, the 12th article of faith came to mind: "We believe in . . . obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." Rather than drive, I knew that I must obey the law of the land (see D&C 58:21), even if doing so meant missing church.



A few days later I transferred to a hotel where several of my co-workers were staying. On Saturday morning, after a walk I returned to the hotel, still trying to figure out how to attend church the next day. As I passed the reception desk, to my surprise, I saw a copy of the *Liabona* in Spanish.

"Who is a member of the Church here?" I asked. Someone responded that the magazine belonged to one of the hotel workers. The receptionist went to his office and invited him to meet me. As we chatted about the Church, this good brother told me that there was a ward right there in La Victoria and that the chapel was located just a short walk from the hotel. He told me he would be happy to meet me the following morning and accompany me to church. What joy!

I ended up being in La Victoria for two more months. During that time I built many friendships as I happily participated in meetings and activities. Shortly after Easter, I obtained legal permission to drive, which enabled me to attend stake conference in Maracay.

While I was in Venezuela, my testimony of the importance of obeying the law of the land—even when inconvenient—was strengthened. I also obtained a testimony that Church publications are an effective way to share the blessings of the Lord. ■



The Book with Answers

By Alessandra Maria Pereira de Paula

While watching a documentary on the Amazon jungle, I learned that missionaries from various religions had taught the Native Americans about Jesus Christ. I began to wonder about the salvation of the millions of their ancestors who had never heard about Jesus, the gospel, or saving ordinances like baptism. If the Savior came for the salvation of all humankind, why had so many throughout history been excluded from His glorious message?

I searched for answers in the Bible, but I couldn't find anything suggesting that the Old World was even aware of the civilizations in the Americas. No pastor, priest, or Bible student could answer my questions.

One day I was moved by a hymn I heard. I learned the hymn in my own language, Portuguese, and as I struggled to translate it into English, I remembered that my Latter-day Saint neighbor, Jesuina, often received American missionaries in her home. I asked her if the missionaries could translate it for me. The next day they left a translation with a short note

that read, "It was a pleasure to be able to help you. One day we would like to meet you."

When I met the missionaries a week later, they invited me to visit their church. But I did not like Mormons. Members of my family and leaders of other churches I had investigated criticized them, calling them a dangerous sect. They made many absurd criticisms that I believed to be true. One rainy Sunday shortly thereafter, however, I awoke with a great desire to visit their church—to repay them for their kindness but also out of curiosity. During the first meeting, people went to the pulpit and testified they knew that the Church and the Book of Mormon were true and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. Somewhat disturbed, I left the meeting and went to Sunday School.

When the teacher mentioned scriptures or stories from the Bible, I was eager to participate. But when she spoke about the Book of Mormon, I remained quiet and pensive. Why another book if we already had the Bible? Before I left, the teacher thanked me for my participation and then surprised me by giving me her copy of the Book of Mormon.

When I returned home, I went to my room, knelt on the floor, and began a sincere conversation with Heavenly Father. I told Him that I felt something special about the

Mormon Church but that I didn't want the adversary to delude me. I prayed that He would help resolve my confusion and show me which church was true.

Afterward I felt a great desire to read the Book of Mormon. I prayed again for strength and direction. During my prayer, I felt a strong and good feeling—an interior warmth. I knew I was not alone at that moment. A thought came instantly into my head: "Read the book!"

I opened it and began reading. Before I had finished the introduction, tears began running down my face as the Lord revealed to me the mystery of the Native Americans. The Book of Mormon seemed prepared especially to respond to my concerns. I felt great joy to have my questions answered. It was as though the ancient Americans had spoken from their graves to tell me about their lives and to testify that they also knew Jesus and that He had suffered for them as well.

Amazed with my discovery, I sought out the missionaries and listened to their lessons. On Easter Sunday, March 31, 1991, I descended into the waters of baptism—the best decision I had ever made.

I feel immensely grateful to Heavenly Father for His mercy and great wisdom. I know that He is just, that He has not forgotten any of His children, and that He is eager to reveal His plan to all humankind. I know that the Book of Mormon is a sacred book. It is true. ■

Something I Wasn't Expecting

By Aubrey Williams

In high school I became involved with a young man my family did not approve of. Eventually, because of their opposition, I became hostile toward my siblings and hateful toward my parents. Unfortunately, I was convinced that they didn't know what was good for me; only I knew. How could they be so opposed to my boyfriend? Yes, he said awful things to me sometimes. But I believed he hurt me because he loved me. I felt that no one else really cared about me.

Being in an abusive relationship altered my emotions and perceptions. I was angry at everyone one moment and disappointed in myself the next. I stayed away from church, eluded everyone who really loved me, and avoided anything spiritual, especially good music. I was hurting, though I wouldn't admit it.

As I was struggling with my life and everyone around me, my violin teacher asked me for help. She was the Primary music leader in her ward, which was planning a

sacrament meeting featuring songs by the Primary. My teacher asked if I would be willing to play violin accompaniment on a few songs. I didn't want to, but I said yes. When she handed me the music, I looked through the titles. The last piece was "I Am a Child of God" (*Hymns*, no. 301).

I was not thrilled because I knew the power of music. I began practicing the songs anyway, while doing everything I could to repel the Spirit—from thinking of how much I hated my fam-

ily to trying to keep the songs out of my mind when not practicing.

When the Sunday for the program finally arrived, I couldn't wait for it to be

over. During the program, I tried to ignore the Spirit, but when it came time for the closing song, my violin teacher did something I wasn't expecting. She turned around and invited the congregation to join in singing.

I placed my bow on the violin strings and struck the first note. The Spirit hit me with such force that tears began streaming down my cheeks before the end of the second line. The Spirit told me to listen to the lyrics and remember that I was a child of God, would always be special to Him, and did not need an abusive boyfriend. I needed Him.

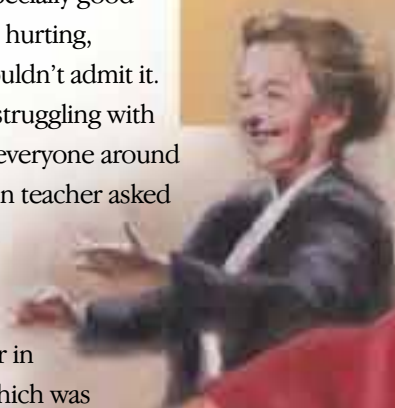
The sound of all those voices— young and old—singing the hymn's simple words helped me hear and understand His words, the words of my family, and the words of Church leaders. Music was my weakness. Heavenly Father knew music was the way to my heart. I was the one who needed to change, not my family.

The Lord knows and understands the power of music (see D&C

25:12). It can lift us and open our hearts and minds to the Spirit.

I will always be grateful for music and the spirit it still brings to my life today. ■

The Spirit told me to listen to the lyrics and remember that I was a child of God.



Energizing Couch Potatoes

Are your children couch potatoes? Ours used to be—until my husband and I came up with a plan. We decided to allot each child one “free” hour of computer, television, or video-game time a day. They can mix and match these activities if they want to, but if they watch a sibling doing any of these things, that counts for their hour. After they have used their free hour, our children can then earn up to another hour for that day by engaging in other healthy or useful activities.

For instance, they can provide an hour of service for another family member to earn 15 extra minutes. Practicing the piano a half hour beyond the regular practice time earns another 15 minutes. Hour-long activities such as exercising or playing outdoors, reading a book, or playing constructively with a friend are also encouraged. They can earn an extra hour in 15-minute increments, but we limit computer and TV time to two hours a day maximum.

How do we keep track of it all? Initially we made a chart to record the 15-minute earnings, but we soon switched to the honor system. In fact, our children seem to enjoy the constructive activities

so much that they sometimes accrue TV

time and don’t bother to use it!

By earning TV and computer time, our children have become more conscious of how they spend their time overall. Now they tend to choose activities that strengthen them—mentally and physically.

Kathryn Palmer, Colorado

Just a Small Donation

Just \$1—we wondered if such a small donation would make a difference. As a couple, we’d always paid our tithes and fast offerings. But on a fixed pension, it was a challenge to contribute to the other funds, such as general missionary and Book of Mormon, listed on the donation slip. During one of our home teachers’ visits, we mentioned that we’d been thinking of donating \$1 to each fund and wondered if that would look silly or cheap, giving so little. But we realized if every Church member who is able would do this, it could provide millions of dollars a month to each of these funds.

With that encouraging realization, we began to make our dollar donations each month.

Our donation may be small, but if Church members throughout the world joined the effort, just think of the blessings that could be provided to Church members and others throughout the world.

Alf and Lois Hopkins, Canada



Family History Now

What do taking photographs, scrapbooking, and writing in your journal have in common? They are all relatively simple ways to gather and record your family history. Even during your busiest seasons of life, you can still gather valuable information about immediate and extended family.

1. Take photographs. Develop all your still images and organize them in an album or scrapbook, writing down details as you go. Even if your photos end up in a storage box, at least record pertinent information on the back of each—person's name, location, and date, if not automatically printed. You can also store this information with your video and digital recordings. Looking back at my 50-year-old photos, I can seldom distinguish my boys from one another in their baby pictures—and neither can anyone else. So make it easy on yourself and record the details as you go. Also, ask family members for copies of old family photos, along with all the information they may have.

2. Scrapbook. Since scrapbooking is a great way to preserve your family's history, you may want to include full-page descriptions of family events. Short captions are good too, but the more information you can provide, the better. At Mom's birthday party,

FAMILY HOME EVENING HELPS



Family Fun with the Articles of Faith

Many of us are trying to help our families or Primary classes learn the Articles of Faith. So why not make a game of it? First, memorize the following key words for each article of faith: (1) Godhead, (2) Adam, (3) Atonement, (4) first principles, (5) hands, (6) organization, (7) gifts, (8) word of God, (9) revelation, (10) ten tribes, (11) worshiping, (12) law, (13) praiseworthy (see the Primary 5 manual). Then you're ready to play the following games:

- **Musical articles.** Write each key word on a different large square of colored paper. Place the squares on the floor. Play some music and have

the children move clockwise from square to square. When the music stops, the players who can say the article of faith indicated on their square are invited to do so. Repeat the game several times so the children can practice several articles of faith.

- **Brainteaser.** Have one person face the group and draw a key word from a sack. Without looking at the word, the person sticks it on his or her forehead with a bit of tape. The group then gives hints or repeats the
- matching article of faith, without saying the key word. If someone says the word before the person with the word on his or her forehead guesses it, that person must place the next key word on his or her forehead.
- **Make a match.** Write each key word and the numbers 1–13 on separate squares of paper. Turn the papers face down. One at a time, the players turn over two squares of paper until they find the matches.

Suzanne Ferrin, Utah



for instance, you could list who came and how they are related, where the party was held, what food was served, what gifts she received, and what activities everyone did.

3. Keep a journal. Not only can you express your innermost thoughts in your journal, but you can also keep track of family events. Document births, deaths, marriages, birthdays, graduations, and other important events, including as many details as possible. In writing about Uncle

John's funeral, for instance, tell where it was held, who attended, and their relationship to the deceased. If you don't already know all the details, tag the journal page so you can verify historical information later.

If you are not able to devote much time to family history work, at least do what you can. Remember that today will soon become yesterday—and eventually history. Don't let it slip away.

Roxanne Freeman, Michigan



Caroline Johanson picks up a Young Women manual at a distribution center in Salt Lake City.

Church Curriculum for 2008 Required Years of Preparation

A thundering four-color press at a sprawling printing facility located in Salt Lake City has been running hundreds of thousands of pages per hour, 24 hours a day, six days a week preparing the 2008 curriculum of the Church.

Once printed—in languages as diverse as Burmese, Spanish, Cambodian, and English—the pages are collated and assembled by high-speed machines into books, manuals, and other printed materials to be used during priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, and Primary classes.

“Curriculum, the instructional material of the Church, is used throughout the world

to teach the principles of the gospel to more than 13 million members, whose ages range from as young as 18 months old to adults,” explains David Frischknecht, managing director of the Curriculum Department. “The languages may be different, but the lessons are the same. A Church class in Chicago learns from the same content a Church class in Chile is using.”

This past year, Church members worldwide studied from the New Testament during Sunday School. In 2008 the scripture focus will be the Book of Mormon.

Priesthood and Relief Society classes will continue to take their lessons from the

same book. The 2007 curriculum was the teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, the 12th President of the Church. In 2008 the study material will be from the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

On average it takes the Curriculum Department one and a half years to plan and write a lesson manual. All the material is reviewed by the Correlation Department to be sure it is consistent with scripture and the teachings of the prophets.

If the lesson material needs to be translated from English into one of the 170 languages currently spoken in the Church, the process can take months more. Factoring in printing and distribution, a

manual in a language other than English can take a total of two and a half years to produce.

To print these materials in a timely manner, the Church operates publication centers in a number of countries outside the United States. These centers work with local printers as coordinated through the printing center in Salt Lake City.

When the Church was formally organized in 1830 and during the Church’s early history, virtually the only teaching materials available to members were the Bible and newly published copies of the Book of Mormon and later the Doctrine and Covenants.

As membership grew, the amount of curriculum materials expanded. The Church’s different organizations for men, women, teenagers, and children became responsible for developing and printing their own materials.

When Church growth began accelerating in the early 1960s, Church leadership recognized the need to correlate the various curricula, and committees were established to bring together the materials. The system was modified over the years until the Curriculum Department was organized in 1978.

A milestone for the Church was reached in 1997, when the first lesson manual was placed online, making it available in an electronic format. Today, all Church curriculum material can be accessed on the Church’s Web site. Go to www.lds.org and click on **Gospel Library**. ■

Tabernacle Organist Leaves Resonating Legacy

By Molly Farmer, Church Magazines

Under the domed roof of the Tabernacle on Temple Square, 11,623 pipes reach heavenward, comprising the world-renowned Tabernacle organ. The vast combination of sounds the instrument is capable of can have an incalculable effect on listeners.

Considered the pinnacle of the profession by many, the responsibility of commanding the keys from the organ console has been entrusted to a limited group of elite musicians throughout the organ's history.

Only 13 people have served as Tabernacle organist since the Tabernacle opened in 1867. An additional six have served as assistant or associate organists. These gifted organists have composed hymns, performed for millions via radio and television broadcasts, and been recognized the world over as masters in their field.

John Longhurst, whose service began in 1977, has been an integral part of this storied history. After 30 years of service, Brother Longhurst retired from his post as senior organist in December 2007. Though his absence will be felt by all who associated with him, his legacy as a musician and leader will live on.

Millions Touched

Known for his extensive performance career, Brother

Longhurst has reached millions of people through the demanding full-time schedule he maintained. Over the course of his tenure, his adept accompaniment and solo work has been heard in 59 general conferences, hundreds of recitals, and has been broadcast via radio and television to millions through the Tabernacle Choir's *Music and the Spoken Word*.

"His life has blessed millions of people around the world both in and out of the Church," said Craig Jessop, director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

In addition to his performance work, Brother Longhurst is well known for his gifted compositions. Among the 39 hymns written or composed by Tabernacle

organists, one of the most beloved, "I Believe in Christ" (*Hymns*, no. 134), was put to music by Brother Longhurst and published in the English hymnbook in 1985. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote the text, which he included in his April 1972 general conference address. The hymn has now been translated into 22 languages and is included in every international hymnbook.

A Sound Project

Even with all his remarkable creative contributions, Brother Longhurst may be best remembered for his administrative role in bringing about the impressive organ in the Conference Center. "The Lord saw to it, in my mind, that he was in place for that project," said Clay Christiansen, Brother Longhurst's fellow Tabernacle organist and close friend.

Throughout the organ's

planning, selection, and installation, which took several years, Brother Longhurst was involved in reviewing every detail. He traveled the country testing organs installed by various companies, then worked with the selected builder, Schoenstein & Co., to determine the tonal direction the organ would take.

"John's masterful administrative skills as well as his thorough understanding of the needs that an organ must fulfill in that most important building were a great blessing," Brother Christiansen said.

In addition to directing the design of the Conference Center organ, Brother Longhurst worked with former Tabernacle organist Robert Cundick in overseeing the Tabernacle organ renovation in 1988 and the installation of the organs in the Assembly Hall and the Joseph Smith Memorial Building chapel, as well as the three small practice organs used by the organists.

Brother Christiansen said he believes Brother Longhurst's hand in creating instruments on Temple Square is one contribution among many that he will be remembered for.

"With that beloved hymn in the hymnbook, his work with the Conference Center Schoenstein, and his 30-year legacy playing for the Tabernacle Choir and recitals on Temple Square," Brother Christiansen said, "John Longhurst is going to be a name that is not soon forgotten."



Senior Tabernacle organist John Longhurst retired in December 2007 after 30 years at the console.

Where Words Fail

Thirty years of service have had as profound an impact on Brother Longhurst as his kindness and talent

has had on others.

"I suppose that if an organist had the opportunity to write a script for his or her career," Brother Longhurst

said, "one could not possibly have written a script that would be more exciting, challenging, and rewarding than the career I have

experienced. To come here to Temple Square and have the opportunity of performing in world-class facilities on world-class instruments

Tabernacle Organists Play Many Roles for Church

As technology and Church membership have increased, so have the responsibilities of Tabernacle organists.

While performing at general conference is certainly a Tabernacle organist's most high-profile task, there's much more to the calling than accompanying the choir at the semiannual event. The responsibilities are so extensive, in fact, there are currently five professionals who carry them out.

Full-time organists Richard Elliott, Clay Christiansen, and Andrew Unsworth and part-time organists Linda

Margetts and Bonnie Goodliffe are currently called to perform in both musical and managerial roles as organists under the auspices of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

"The workload and the pressure are very visible and very intense," said Craig Jessop, director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

They perform in Church-sponsored events on Temple Square, including Church Educational System firesides, regional conferences, and important funerals, as well as regular Choir broadcasts and concerts. They also take turns

performing in daily organ recitals held on Temple Square, including twice daily between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Preparing for so many performances requires between two and six hours of practice per organist per day on top of the performances themselves.

In addition to the more conspicuous musical responsibilities, much of the administrative work of the Tabernacle organists takes place behind the scenes.

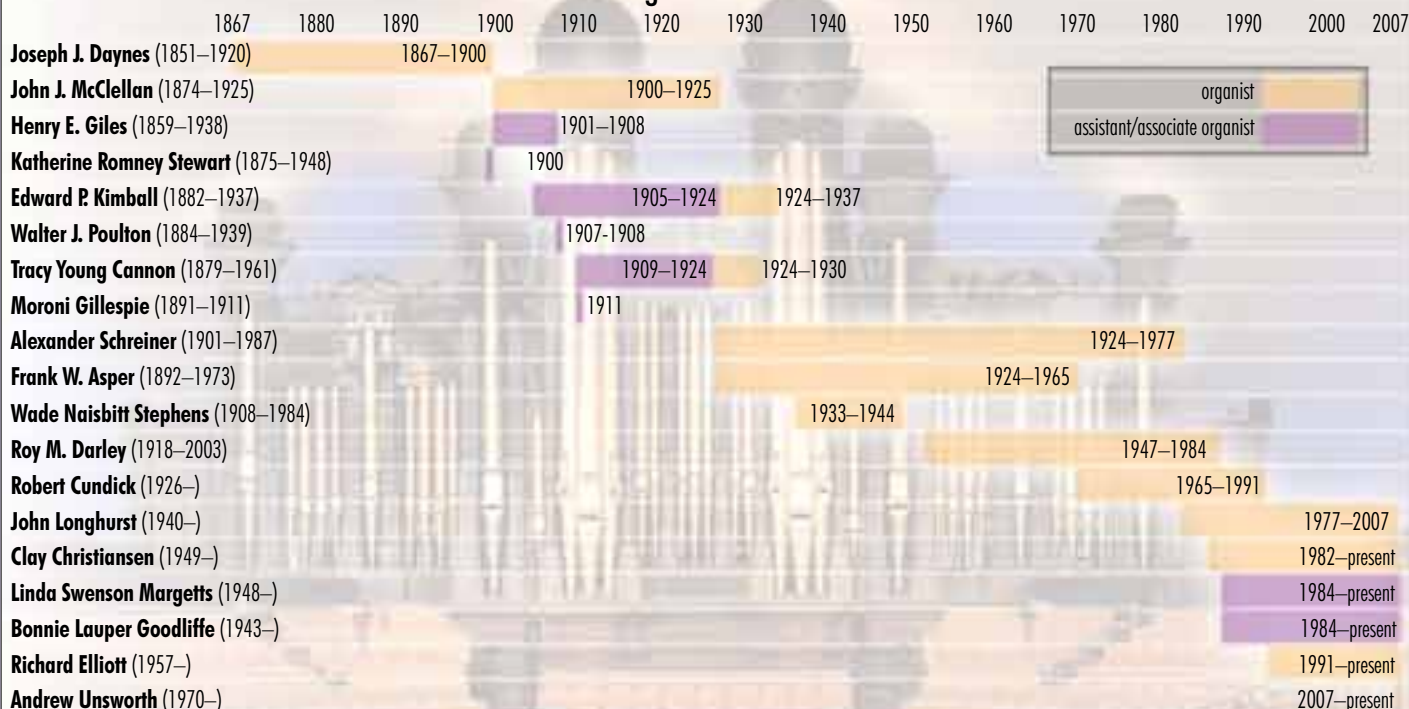
"There's a lot of non-musical work that most people don't associate with the position," said former Tabernacle organist John Longhurst.

A great deal of time and

effort is spent answering letters and phone calls, performing committee assignments, engaging in public relations work, interfacing with various Church departments and outside entities, scheduling, and occasionally creating new musical arrangements.

The organists assist with the Church's various media features and give lectures at educational presentations such as the American Classic Organ Symposium and National Federation of Music Clubs. They also participate in outreach programs representing the Church and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir away from Temple Square. ■

Tabernacle Organists and Their Service



has been like a dream.”

While his fellow collaborators can't say enough about Brother Longhurst's legacy, he was at a loss for words when he tried to express his feelings about his associates and experience.

“You come to a point

where words finally are inadequate to say what you feel,” Brother Longhurst concluded after several attempts. “I think that's the beauty of art. When it's all said and done, art can take the human spirit beyond the point where words fail.” ■

New Opportunities Allow More Members to Serve

Sister Thelma Taylor was happy with her calling at her local family history center in Mesa, Arizona, USA. For 17 years she assisted, guided, and supported men and women in their quests to find their ancestors. A move to Coolidge, Arizona, in 2005, however, put 40 miles (64 km) between her and the family history center whose patrons she had faithfully served.

Nearly blind and unable to drive, the 83-year-old woman feared her inability to travel to Mesa would mean the end of her family history service. Then a thoughtful leader offered a solution to this problem in the form of a Church-service mission Sister Taylor could perform from home. Since 2006 she has served as a FamilySearch Support missionary for the Church, using her home computer to help people do their family history work.

“It has blessed me beyond my ability to count all the blessings,” she says of her experience. “I've grown so much in that area in family history and in my ability to serve.”

A New Resource Brings New Needs

As the Church begins testing changes to the FamilySearch.org Web site, there is a significant need for Church-service missionaries like Sister Taylor to help patrons use family history tools to find their ancestors.

FamilySearch, the Church's online genealogical resource, is being rebuilt with new features that will allow temple ordinance cards for ancestors to be printed at home and will help prevent ordinance work duplication. The need for Church-service missionaries from around the world will continue to grow as the new FamilySearch is made available worldwide.

“They have the opportunity to propel the Lord's work forward with each interaction with a patron,” said Art Johnson, area manager for the FamilySearch Support.

Using New Technologies to Serve

Using a Web-based telephone program, the missionaries, who can be located anywhere in the world as long as they have broadband Internet access, respond to as

many as 10,000 inquiries per month. Patrons' questions span many topics, including family history research, indexing, and submitting names to the temple.

Though her eyesight is poor, Sister Taylor—now a supervisor over six fellow missionaries—can increase the font size on her computer enough to read patrons' e-mails and respond to their questions.

Service missionaries are given extensive online training they can complete at home. They also have access to a team of individuals to help them with their questions and provide individual training and help. Once they've finished the training, they have access to a database that includes some 4,000 articles they can refer to for answers to patrons' questions.

Sister Taylor didn't learn how to operate a computer until she was 66 years old, but she says it is a beneficial, useful skill. “Your age doesn't

matter,” she said. “You're not too old to learn how to use [a computer].”

Who Can Serve and How

A Church-service mission with FamilySearch Support is not meant to be a substitute for full-time missionary service, but it provides an option to serve for those who are not able to serve a full-time mission.

“This is an ideal situation for me because I can continue to learn and serve,” Sister Taylor said. She said her Church-service mission has helped her to feel useful at an age when her options are limited.

Church-service missionaries are set apart and wear nametags, just as full-time missionaries do. They receive intensive training on the workings of the Web site and learn techniques on how best to answer patrons' questions. FamilySearch Support missionaries serve some 15 to 30 hours a week for 6 to 30 months and can serve the full



Church-service missionary Elizabeth Perry helps David Parra use the old FamilySearch Web site. The new site will allow users to do more from home, including receiving help from Church-service missionaries also serving at home.

10,000 Volunteers Sought for Project to Put Latin American Family History Online

FamilySearch is calling for 10,000 volunteers who can read both English and Spanish to help digitally preserve and index online millions of Latin American records that are now difficult to access because they are located on microfilm or in an archive.

Volunteers can spend as little as 30 minutes a week indexing records from their home computers. Volunteers simply type in the information highlighted on the

digital image. The completed products will be free, fully searchable online indexes linked to the original images at FamilySearch.org.

The 10,000 bilingual indexers will be added to a growing army of volunteers that will soon top 100,000, well ahead of projections.

Those interested in volunteering should register at FamilySearchIndexing.org, which will allow them to download one batch at a time. ■



With the help of 10,000 bilingual indexers, online Family Search hopes to help those seeking Latin American ancestors avoid having to search through large archives.

mission from their homes.

There are currently some 700 service missionaries assisting in this capacity, and that number may need to double over the next year as the new FamilySearch is made available to more areas. Men and women interested in becoming Church-service missionaries should contact their

bishop or branch president.

Those interested in more information on FamilySearch Support opportunities can call 866-406-1830 or e-mail support@FamilySearch.org.

A Blessing to Missionaries and Patrons

The lives of many members, elderly and young, have

been blessed by the opportunity to be service missionaries, their leaders point out, and many souls will feel the effects of their labor.

"The spirit of consecration [that Church-service missionaries] bring to their calls has enabled us to really see miracles in the growth and expansion of the work," Brother Johnson said.

The work is fulfilling and contagious. "The spirit of this work gets into you and doesn't turn you loose," Sister Taylor said. "No matter your age, you can be of real service as a FamilySearch

Support missionary."

Brother Johnson said the support provided by service missionaries is crucial to the success of the new FamilySearch. An answer provided to a patron may help someone find an ancestor and complete his or her temple work, and that is a very important, sacred undertaking.

"Through our efforts, we can enable our brothers and sisters on the other side of the veil to receive the same blessings and ordinances of the gospel we enjoy," Brother Johnson said. ■

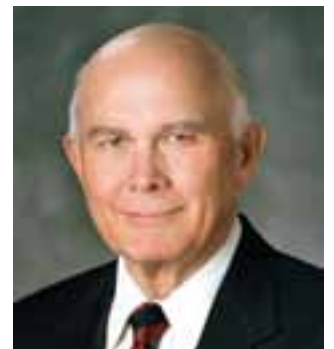
Elder Oaks Honored in Religious Freedom Exhibit

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was honored in an exhibit featuring those who have helped define the concept of religious freedom.

The exhibit, titled Faces of Religious Freedom, opened on September 19, 2007, in Richmond, Virginia, USA, and was created by the Council for America's First Freedom.

"Dallin Oaks was selected to represent the Latter-day Saints not only for his leadership role within Church hierarchy, but as an individual that has achieved great accomplishments in his personal life and has in turn promoted the importance of religious freedom through his work," said Isabelle Kinnard, council vice president for education and exhibition curator.

Text accompanying the



Elder Dallin H. Oaks

photo of Elder Oaks in the exhibit extols his leadership in the Church, his time as a professor of law at the University of Chicago, as president of Brigham Young University, and as a justice of the Utah Supreme Court. It also quotes the eleventh article of faith, "We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege. . . ." ■



Traveling Near the Red Sea, by Gary E. Smith

"And it came to pass that the Lord commanded my father, even in a dream, that he should take his family and depart into the wilderness. . . . Wherefore he did as the Lord commanded him. . . . He left his bouse, and the land of his inheritance, . . . and his precious things, and took nothing with him, save it were his family, . . . and he traveled in the wilderness in the borders which are nearer the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:2-5).



Among his many accomplishments, the Prophet Joseph Smith laid the foundation of our latter-day doctrinal understanding. “This generation,” said the Lord to Joseph, “shall have my word through you” (D&C 5:10). See “The Prophet Joseph Smith, an Extraordinary Teacher,” p. 12.