

Ensign



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"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

Photograph of the Milky Way, taken from Jackson Lake, Wyoming, USA

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Ensign

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The First Presidency: Thomas S. Monson,
Henry B. Eyring, Dieter F. Uchtdorf

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Printing Director: Steven T. Lewis

Distribution Director: Stephen R.
Christiansen

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Family Home Evening Ideas

This issue contains articles and activities that could be used for family home evening. The following are some examples.



**“Like the Widow of Zarephath: The
Miracle of Fast Offerings,”** page 32.

Consider reading this article together as a

family and then studying
the story of the widow
of Zarephath in 1 Kings
17. You could then
answer the following
questions: How does
fasting bless us individ-
ually and as a family?
Who might our fast
offerings bless? What
blessings might we see
in our home by giving
a more generous fast
offering? You could
discuss the possibility of
giving a more generous
fast offering or other
ways you could help the
poor and needy as a
family.

“My Adopted Pioneer Ancestors,”

page 36: You may want to prepare for family
home evening by reading the article before-

hand and gathering a
few pioneer stories. The
stories could be about
the first members of the
Church in your family
or about pioneers in
Church history. Consider
summarizing the
author's experience for
your family and sharing
some of the stories you
have gathered. Discuss
together what it means
to be a pioneer. What
blessings have you and
your family received
because of those who
came before you? Invite
family members to think
of ways they can honor
their gospel heritage.

RECOGNIZING PROMPTINGS

For family night, my husband and I wanted to teach our children about recognizing promptings from the Holy Ghost. I put various hard foods—such as rice, beans, pasta shells, and peppercorns—into opaque plastic containers, using two containers for each food item. We then challenged our children to match the foods by shaking the containers and listening carefully. After a few rounds I asked how this activity might be compared to identifying the voice of the Spirit among other distracting influences. Before long, the older children were telling about their experiences with the Holy Ghost, and we all gained an appreciation for what it means to hear and feel the still, small voice.

Anita L. Reeves, Utah, USA

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the *Ensign* blessed your life?
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or questions, use the “Submit an
Article” link on our web page.



By President
Thomas S.
Monson

TRUE TO THE FAITH

OF OUR FOREFATHERS

John Linford was 43 when he and his wife, Maria, and three of their sons made the decision to leave their home in Gravely, England, to journey thousands of miles to join the Saints in the valley of the Great Salt Lake. They left behind their fourth son, who was serving a mission, sold their belongings, and took passage in Liverpool aboard the ship *Thornton*.

The journey by sea to New York City, and thence by land to Iowa, proved uneventful. Troubles began, however, shortly after the Linfords and other Latter-day Saints who had sailed on the *Thornton* left Iowa City on July 15, 1856, as part of the ill-fated James G. Willie handcart company.

The harsh weather and arduous travel took their toll on many in the company, including John. He eventually became so ill and weak that he had to be pulled in a handcart. By the time the company reached Wyoming, his condition had deteriorated significantly. A rescue team from Salt Lake City arrived on October 21, just hours after John's mortal journey ended. He had died early that morning near the banks of the Sweetwater River.

Was John sorry he had traded comfort and ease for the

struggles, privations, and hardships of taking his family to Zion?

"No, Maria," he told his wife just before he died. "I am glad we came. I shall not live to reach Salt Lake, but you and the boys will, and I do not regret all we have gone through if our boys can grow up and raise their families in Zion."¹

Maria and her sons completed their journey. When Maria passed away nearly 30 years later, she and John left behind a legacy of faith, of service, of devotion, and of sacrifice.

To be a Latter-day Saint is to be a pioneer, for the definition of a pioneer is "one who goes before to prepare or open up the way for others to follow."² And to be a pioneer is to become acquainted with sacrifice. Although members of the Church are no longer asked to leave their homes to make the journey to Zion, they often must leave behind old habits, longtime customs, and cherished friends. Some make the agonizing decision to leave behind family members who oppose their Church membership. Latter-day Saints move forward, however, praying that precious ones will yet understand and accept.

The path of a pioneer is not easy, but we follow in the footsteps of the ultimate Pioneer—even the Savior—who



subsequent trials she endured for her family and the Church.

At a 1937 graveside ceremony dedicated to Maria's memory, Elder George Albert Smith (1870–1951) asked her posterity: "Will you live true to the faith of your ancestors? . . . Do strive to be worthy of all the sacrifices [they] have made for you."⁷

As we seek to build Zion in our hearts, in our homes, in our communities, and in our countries, may we remember the resolute courage and abiding faith of those who gave their all that we might enjoy the blessings of the restored gospel, with its hope and promise through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. ■

NOTES

1. See Andrew D. Olsen, *The Price We Paid* (2006), 45–46, 136–37.
2. *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), "pioneer."
3. Luke 18:22.
4. John 14:6.
5. John 7:37; see also 3 Nephi 9:22.
6. "Come, Come, Ye Saints," *Hymns*, no. 30.
7. See Olsen, *The Price We Paid*, 203–4.

went before, showing us the way to follow.

"Come, follow me,"³ He invited.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life,"⁴ He declared.

"Come unto me,"⁵ He called.

The way can be trying. Some find it difficult to withstand the mocking and unsavory remarks of foolish ones who ridicule chastity, honesty, and obedience to God's commands. The world has ever belittled adherence to principle. When Noah was instructed to build an ark, the foolish populace looked at the cloudless sky and then scoffed and jeered—until the rain came.

On the American continent long centuries ago, people doubted, disputed, and disobeyed until the fire consumed Zarahemla, the earth covered Moronihah, and the water

engulfed Moroni. Jeering, mocking, ribaldry, and sin were no more. They had been replaced by sullen silence, dense darkness. The patience of God had expired, His timetable fulfilled.

Maria Linford never lost her faith despite persecution in England, the hardships of her journey to "the place which God . . . prepared,"⁶ and the

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Consider asking those you teach to think of people in their lives who have gone before and been pioneers for them. Then ask them when they've had to be pioneers and prepare the way for others. Invite them to ponder the moments that they've had to sacrifice and why it was worthwhile. You could then challenge them to record their testimony of "the ultimate Pioneer," the Savior.

YOUTH

True to Their Faith

President Monson tells a story about one pioneer family and then quotes President George Albert Smith: “Will you live true to the faith of your ancestors? . . . Strive to be worthy of all the sacrifices [they] have made for you.” Whether you have a pioneer ancestry or are a first-generation member of the Church, do you look to examples of faith for guidance and strength? Here’s a good way you can get started:

1. Make a list of people you admire. They can be members of your own family (past or present), friends, Church leaders, or people in the scriptures.

2. Write down the qualities they have that you like. Is your mom really patient? Maybe your friend is kind to others. Perhaps you love Captain Moroni’s courage.

3. Pick one quality from your list and ask yourself, “How can I gain this quality? What do I need to do to develop this in my life?”

4. Write down your plans for developing this quality and put it somewhere you’ll see it often, to remind you of your goal. Pray for Heavenly Father’s help and check your progress



regularly. Once you feel you have sufficiently developed this quality, you can pick a new quality to work on.

Remember that as we develop great qualities in ourselves, we not only honor the faith of our ancestors and the sacrifices they made, but we can also be an influence for good to those around us.

CHILDREN

You’re a Pioneer Too!

Pioneers are people who prepare the way for others to follow.

Draw a picture or find a photo of one of your ancestors. Can you find a story of how they prepared the way for you to follow? Write two ways you can be a pioneer today. You can share your ideas at your next family home evening!



Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” increase your faith in God and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.

Our Potential for Parenthood

“It was essential that God’s spirit [children have mortal birth and an opportunity to progress toward eternal life,” taught Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “In light of the ultimate purpose of the great plan of happiness, I believe that the ultimate treasures on earth and in heaven are our children and our posterity.”¹

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:

“We believe in families, and we believe in children. . . .

“‘. . . God said unto [Adam and Eve], Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth’ [Genesis 1:28]. . . .

“This commandment has not been forgotten or set aside in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”²

Though not all of us become parents in this life, we can nurture children of every age. We enjoy the



blessings of being part of Heavenly Father’s family, and we experience the joys and challenges of being part of an earthly family. And for many, parenthood awaits them in the eternities ahead.

Additional Scriptures

Psalm 127:3; Matthew 18:3–5; 1 Nephi 7:1; Moses 5:2–3

Consider This

In what ways is our earthly family like our heavenly family?

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Great Plan of Happiness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 72, 75.
2. Neil L. Andersen, “Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 28.
3. Neil L. Andersen, “Children,” 28.

Faith, Family, Relief



Living Stories

“Many voices in the world today marginalize the importance of having children or suggest delaying or limiting children in a family,” said Elder Andersen. “My daughters recently referred me to a blog written by a Christian mother (not of our faith) with five children. She commented: ‘[Growing] up in this culture, it is very hard to get a biblical perspective on motherhood. . . . Children rank way below college. Below world travel for sure. Below the ability to go out at night at your leisure. Below honing your body at the gym. Below any job you may have or hope to get.’ She then adds: ‘Motherhood is not a hobby, it is a calling. You do not collect children because you find them cuter than stamps. It is not something to do if you can squeeze the time in. It is what God gave you time for.’”³

APRIL 2016 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

As you review the April 2016 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.



Keep Trying

“The first great *commandment* of all eternity is to love God with all of *our* heart, might, mind, and strength. . . . But the first great *truth* of all eternity is that God loves *us* with all of *His* heart, might, mind, and strength. That love is the foundation stone of eternity, and it should be the foundation stone of our daily life. Indeed it is only with that reassurance burning in our soul that we can have the confidence to keep trying to improve, keep seeking forgiveness for our sins, and keep extending that grace to our neighbor.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Tomorrow the Lord Will Do Wonders among You,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 126–27.

PROPHETIC PROMISE



Choices

“The path we follow in this life leads to our destination in the next life.

“May we choose to build up within ourselves a great and powerful faith which will be our most effective defense against the designs of the adversary—a real faith, the kind of faith which will sustain us and will bolster our desire to choose the right. Without such faith, we go nowhere. With it, we can accomplish our goals.

“Although it is imperative that we choose wisely, there are times when we will make foolish choices. The gift of repentance, provided by our Savior, enables us to correct our course settings, that we might return to the path which will lead us to that celestial glory we seek. . . .

“. . . If we choose Christ, we will have made the correct choice.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Choices,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 86.

Answers for You

Each conference, prophets and apostles give inspired answers to questions Church members may have. Use your May 2016 issue or visit conference.lds.org to find answers to these questions:

- How can you help Latter-day Saint children and youth from nonmember homes? —See Neil L. Andersen, “Whoso Receiveth Them, Receiveth Me,” 49.
- What is the role of the Holy Ghost in your life? —See Robert D. Hales, “The Holy Ghost,” 105.
- Why is it important to save your marriage? —See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “In Praise of Those Who Save,” 77.
- Why do we need opposition in all things? —See Dallin H. Oaks, “Opposition in All Things,” 114.

“The great enemy of charity is pride.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf,
Second Counselor in the First Presidency,
“In Praise of Those Who Save,”
Ensign, May 2016, 80.

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit conference.lds.org.



“I WAS A STRANGER”

“There are more than 60 million refugees, including forcibly displaced people, worldwide. Half of those are children. . . .

“As sisters we make up more than half of the Lord’s storehouse to help Heavenly Father’s children. His storehouse is not composed just of goods but also of time, talents, skills, and our divine nature. . . .

“With these truths in mind, we have organized a relief effort called ‘I Was a Stranger’ [see IWasaStranger.lds.org]. It is our hope that you will prayerfully determine what you can do—according to your own time and circumstance—to serve the refugees living in your neighborhoods and communities.”

Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president, “I Was a Stranger,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 13, 14.

Who Said This?

Can you match the following quotes to the conference speaker?

1. “A child’s spiritual DNA is perfect because one’s true identity is as a son or daughter of God.” _____
2. “The best way I know of to draw closer to God is to prepare conscientiously and partake worthily of the sacrament each week.” _____
3. “So keep loving. Keep trying. Keep trusting. Keep believing. Keep growing. Heaven is cheering you on today, tomorrow, and forever.” _____
4. “The leaders of this Church are no strangers to your issues, to your concerns, and to your challenges.” _____
5. “To provide alternatives on which to exercise our agency, we must have opposition.” _____

Answers: 1. Neil L. Andersen; 2. Dale G. Kentlund; 3. Jeffrey R. Holland; 4. Ronald A. Rasband; 5. Dallin H. Oaks

LOVING OTHERS WITH DIFFERENT VALUES

Name withheld

I was trying to raise my children to have high moral values. But when one of their role models made a wrong choice, I wondered if everything I had tried to teach would unravel.

My sister-in-law Janey (name has been changed) was raised in the gospel and was a very committed member of the Church. After her seemingly happy temple marriage dissolved, people in her small community began to spread rumors and make judgments about her. She distanced herself from many of her friends and eventually the Church.

She started dating a young man, Andy, who soon moved in with her. I worried about what to tell my kids. My three young daughters loved their aunt Janey. Not only are our families very close, but she was their dance teacher, so they saw her several times a week.

For many months, they thought that Andy was visiting a lot, but I finally had to tell them that Janey and Andy were living together. I explained that the choice they made was a serious sin. My daughters seemed to understand, and we had a good discussion about the importance of living gospel principles.

Then a bomb hit. Janey happily announced to the family that she and Andy were expecting a baby. Again I worried about how this news would affect my children. Did they realize that this is not how Heavenly Father wants His children brought to earth? If they were around this situation, would they think it was acceptable and normal?

I fretted for weeks, not wanting to tell my children of this newest development. A month later Janey and Andy decided to get married. Why hadn't they waited to announce the pregnancy until after they were married?

Resentment boiled up inside me. How could I love Janey but not what she had done? How could I teach my kids to continue to love their aunt



COMMITMENT TO TRUTH

"Our tolerance and respect for others and their beliefs does not cause us to abandon our commitment to the truths we understand and the covenants we have made. . . . We must stand up for truth, even while we practice tolerance and respect for beliefs and ideas different from our own and for the people who hold them. . . .

"Similarly, with our children and others whom we have a duty to teach, our duty to truth is paramount. Of course, teaching efforts bear fruit only through the agency of others, so our teaching must always be done with love, patience, and persuasion."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Balancing Truth and Tolerance," *Ensign*, Feb. 2013, 28, 29.



How could I teach my kids to continue to love their aunt but not the choices she had made?

but not the choices she had made?

One day my sister told me about a young woman in her ward who had become pregnant. This young woman continued going to church and seemed happy and excited about the upcoming event in her life. The other young women were confused by what they perceived as her seemingly flip-pant attitude about the situation.

But my sister, who was a visiting teacher to the mother of the young woman, learned of the countless nights the young woman had cried herself to sleep, in misery over the choices that had led her to this predicament. After many weeks of torment, the young woman decided that she could continue to mourn over her actions, or she could move forward and be happy. Because of Christ's

atoning sacrifice, she could accept the consequences of her decisions and once again become clean through repentance.

I wondered if Janey had gone through something similar. Had she regretted her choices but, unable to change the consequences, accepted them and decided to move forward?

I felt shame at my harsh judgments and at my inability to love the way Jesus Christ expects us to love. As I reflected on the Savior's life, I remembered that He always sought out the sinners, teaching them through His words and example, and loving them. It was this love that softened hearts and changed people.

I realized that too often I loved people as long as they were acting the way I thought they should, but

as soon as they made a mistake, I condemned them in my heart. What a hypocrite I was! I realized I needed to repent. I needed to learn to love the sinner without endorsing the sin. Finally, I was able to release the anger I held against Janey and truly love her again.

I had another good discussion with my children. I emphasized the importance of getting married before having a baby. We were able to look forward to the birth of a new baby in the family. We all wanted to support Janey and share in this special time of her life. My kids realize that Aunt Janey did something wrong, but they still love her and Uncle Andy and hope their beautiful family will someday decide to come back into the waiting arms of our Savior, Jesus Christ. ■

In Favor of Religious Freedom

People in all nations should work together to promote religious freedom, Church leaders have said repeatedly.

“Church members seek to create goodwill among people of all religious beliefs, political persuasions, and of every race,” said President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, at the John A. Widtsoe Religious Symposium at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, California, USA, in April 2015.

“The effort to throw off traditions of distrust and pettiness and truly see one another with new eyes—see each

other not as aliens or adversaries but as fellow travelers, brothers and sisters, and children of God—is one of the most challenging while at the same time most rewarding and ennobling experiences of our human existence,” President Uchtdorf said. His was one of several appeals for respect and understanding recently made by prophets and apostles.

“There should be no belligerence between religion and government,” Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said at the Court/Clergy Conference at Congregation B’nai Israel in Sacramento, California,

USA, in October 2015. “We all lose when an atmosphere of anger or hostility or contention prevails,” he said.

“Governments and their laws can provide the essential protections for believers and religious organizations and their activities,” he said, noting that religious principles, teachings, and organizations “can help create the conditions in which public laws and government institutions and their citizens can flourish,” so that all can “live together in happiness, harmony, and peace.”

Elder Oaks also spoke about religious freedom at a gathering in Argentina (see “News of the Church,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2016, 16).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles addressed the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Foreign Affairs in the House of Lords in London, England, in June 2015. “By appealing to one’s deepest values,” he said, “religions and religious organizations have a unique capacity to motivate people and, at the same time, cultivate attitudes of forgiveness, reconciliation, and a willingness to strive yet again for the ideal in their personal lives and in society.”

“Religious freedom is the cornerstone of peace in a world with many competing philosophies,” Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum



Meeting with a parliamentary group in London, UK, Elder Holland says religious people have power to motivate society.

*At a religious conference in California, USA, Elder Oaks
appeals for respect between church and state.*



*At a gathering of people of faith
in Brazil, Elder Christofferson says
“religious freedom is the cornerstone
of peace.”*



*President Uchtdorf and his wife,
Harriet, visit with religious lead-
ers in California, USA.*



*Elder Rasband counsels
students at Brigham Young
University to follow Christ’s
teaching to love as He loved.*



of the Twelve Apostles told an inter-faith group at the Brazil Mosque in São Paulo, Brazil, in April 2015. He spoke in Portuguese to an audience that included Muslims, Catholics, Adventists, Jews, Evangelicals, Latter-day Saints, native spiritualists, people of no particular faith, and others during an event celebrating the nation’s strong support of religious liberty. “May we pursue peace,” he said, “by working together to preserve and protect the freedom of all people to hold and manifest a religion or belief of their choice, whether individually or in community with others, at home or abroad, in public or private, and in worship, observance, practice, and teaching.”

“People of faith must be at the forefront in protecting religious

freedom—a freedom from which many other essential freedoms emanate,” said Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as he delivered the Annual Religious Liberty Lecture at the University of Notre Dame Australia in Sydney, Australia, in May 2015. “We must not only protect our ability to profess our own religion but also protect the right of each religion to administer its own doctrines and laws,” he said.

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was serving as the Senior President of the Seventy when he spoke to students at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, USA, in September 2015.

“Some in your age group wonder why religious groups are involved in politics in the first place, and they

are often skeptical of the motives of religious people when they do so,” he said. The collective voice of groups who feel that religion should not play a role in political deliberation has grown louder in recent years, raising the “danger of creating another victimized class: people of faith, like you and me.”

Elder Rasband told the students that the world needs active involvement from their generation on this topic. “We need your generation’s natural understanding of compassion, respect, and fairness. We need your optimism and your determination to work through these complex social issues.” The answer, he said, is to begin with the Savior’s commandment to “love one another, as I have loved you” (John 13:34). ■

Visit news.lds.org for more Church news and events.

DEALING WITH COMING HOME EARLY

By Jenny Rollins

Dad was out of town on a business trip, so the only one to greet me when I limped off the plane from my mission was my mother. She held me and we cried.

I took as many medical tests as possible, but the doctors could not find the problem. Taking off my missionary tag nine months early was the hardest thing I have ever done. I felt like a failure for not finishing my mission.

Meant to Be a Missionary

Being a missionary had always been in my plans. When my older brother left on his mission, I dressed up with a homemade name tag to see him off. When the mission age change was announced in 2012, I had just turned 19 and knew that the announcement was an answer to my prayers. I danced around the room, filled out my paperwork that day, set up my medical appointments, and put my papers in within

Returning home early from a mission, even for health reasons, can be a devastating experience. It was for me. But you can make it a step forward, not a step back.

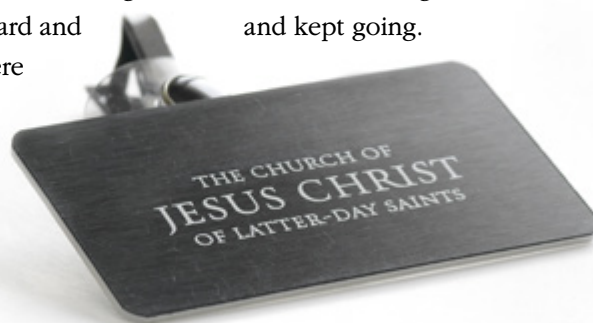
the week. I received my call to the California Anaheim Mission two weeks later and reported to the missionary training center two months after that.

I hit the mission field with “greenie” fire and never wanted to slow down. My trainer and I literally ran to some lessons because we were so excited to teach. For me, being a full-time missionary was the most natural thing in the world. I was awkward and struggled at times, but there

was nothing more amazing to me than being a missionary.

Around eight months into my mission, my companions and I were given bikes because of a car shortage. I hadn’t ridden a bike in a long time and wasn’t entirely sure how to do so in a skirt, but I was thrilled anyway. After a few weeks, though, I developed a pain in my side that would come and go. I ignored it and kept working.

The pain became more frequent and more intense until one night my companion had to take me to the emergency room. I took many medical tests but the doctors couldn’t find the source of my pain. In the weeks that followed, I prayed to Heavenly Father to make the pain go away and received several priesthood blessings, but it just got worse. Every possible position hurt; the pain was constant. But I decided that I could get used to it and kept going.





One day I collapsed on the side of the road, unable to move anymore. I was transported to the hospital to do tests with yet again no results. I tried to take it easy and sit on bus-stop benches with my companions and teach people as they waited for their buses. I sat through lessons, biting my lip through the pain. I eventually pushed myself too far and ended up in the hospital again. I realized that I might permanently damage myself if I stayed on my mission. After a lot of prayer, I received the answer that I should go home to sort out my health issues.

A Step Forward

When I realized I was home for good, I was devastated. But I tried my best to maintain my faith and scripture study. My family handled it well, but the other people around me weren't sure how to react to my situation. They kept asking me questions, and I barely kept it together. One man, however, called me unexpectedly and told me that his son had come home early from a mission a long time ago. He told me that this trial had the potential to destroy my faith and happiness and that it frequently did with many early-returned missionaries. "What you have to remember," he said, "is that as long as



As long as you are trying as hard as you can to live your life righteously, it's always a step forward.

you are trying as hard as you can to live your life righteously, it's always a step forward no matter what happens outside of your control."

That became my motto, and I relied on it heavily for the next year. For eight months I could barely walk, but people would still judge me when they found out that I had come home early. They said that there were people with worse medical conditions who had finished serving. They didn't understand why I couldn't have finished, even with medical difficulties. It was agonizing to hear this when I had loved my mission so much, but I had faith that Heavenly Father had a purpose for my trial and that it would be a step forward.

I began school again and started dating. I could see that I was progressing, but I felt that I would always view

my mission with a little bitterness. Then a friend of mine reminded me that the Savior's Atonement can heal all pain and bitterness. With His help I could be happy when thinking about my mission.

I knelt down and prayed to my Heavenly Father. I told Him about my pain and my efforts to be healed and comforted. I asked if He would take away the bitterness I felt. After my prayer, the Lord opened my eyes to see my mission from His perspective. Both my service and early return were a part of the Lord's plan to help make me into who He wanted me to be. I could see the miracles that He had provided since I came home. It has been a hard path, but now I can look back on my early return home with peace, knowing that God has my best interests at heart.

For RETURNED MISSIONARIES:

6 WAYS TO HANDLE COMING HOME EARLY

Coming home is hard, but with effort you can make your early return an honorable and helpful step forward. These are things that helped me:

Come unto Christ. No matter what caused you to come home, Christ can help you solve it. His Atonement is not just for repentance; it's also for solace, understanding, and healing.

Remember it can be a step forward. As long as you are living

worthy of the Spirit and doing your best, seeming stumbling blocks can be platforms to progression.

Keep up scripture habits. God speaks through the Holy Ghost, accessed through, among other things, the sincere study and application of the scriptures. You might find that God has whole chapters written just to bring you comfort.

Keep busy. Transitioning from a regimented and busy missionary lifestyle to doing nothing might mean a lot of downtime to mope and feel inadequate and sad, which is what Satan wants. God wants you to be

“anxiously engaged” in good causes (see D&C 58:27) because that is what will help you be happy.

Pray for help. Heavenly Father is waiting with blessings of comfort and guidance. All you have to do is ask. Overcoming any trial requires the Lord's help.

Give people the benefit of the doubt. It will be easy to find reasons to be offended by people who may really care about you but might not know how to react to your situation. Focus on the people who are rooting for you and be forgiving of those who pass judgment.

For LOVED ONES:

5 WAYS TO HELP MISSIONARIES WHO COME HOME EARLY

When I came home, I found that people didn't quite know how to treat me. Here are some tips I wish people had known:

Don't judge. People who come home early are in the process of healing or fixing something, whether it's their body, mind, spirit, or even family. Be kind to those who are striving and struggling.

Stop asking questions. While it's genuinely nice to have people care,

probing questions can be harmful. Even if you have kind intentions, don't interrogate an early-return missionary. Show your love through other kinds of support.

Help them stay busy. It's difficult to adjust from the order and activity of a mission to the downtime and new choices at home. Help them find productive, fun, and wholesome things to do.

Let them receive their own revelation. Whether or not missionaries choose to go back into the mission field is between them and Heavenly Father. Encourage them to seek heavenly counsel and trust them to receive their own answers.

Be a friend. Most likely, this will be one of the most difficult trials in an early-return missionary's life. Many have their faith severely challenged. That doesn't mean that they cannot be happy or progress, but they need a friend who is willing to love them unconditionally. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



Staying Strong in France

By Mindy Anne Selu

Church Magazines

Training to be a helicopter pilot isn't an opportunity that most people get. But when Pierre O., 24, decided to enlist in the French Army, he got just that. Now in his second year of the four-year training, Pierre is doing his best to live as an example of the believers, despite his environment.

Stationed about an hour and a half outside of Bordeaux, in southwestern France, Pierre is far from his friends, family, and hometown of Rennes. The nearest meetinghouse is an hour away, meaning that he doesn't get to interact much with members during the week. "It's not easy to be a member of the Church in the army," Pierre says, "because there are a lot of temptations and it's really just two opposite worlds. You're judged a lot in the army not based on what you do but on who you are." Pierre wants those around him to see that he doesn't drink alcohol, smoke, view

pornography, or party—commonplace activities in the army—because of who he is: a member of the Church. While he struggles to earn the respect of those around him, prayer and scripture study help keep his testimony strong. "I try to not go to sleep without having read my scriptures first," he explains, "and I try to pray whenever I can."

"Reading the scriptures and praying helped me a lot during all of my schooling to know that God exists, that He is there—without really understanding the rest of the gospel," Pierre explains. "I just knew that God was there, and so that helped me to stay on the right path."

That foundation of scripture study sustained Pierre throughout all his schooling and even now through his army training. Before enlisting, Pierre served a mission in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, where his testimony and understanding of the gospel were

As a member of the Church in the French Army, Pierre relies on prayer and scripture study to help him be an example of his faith.

solidified. "The scriptures are one of the most tangible ways Heavenly Father answers us," he says.

Through his daily prayer and scripture study, Pierre is able not only to receive inspiration but also to be an example to those in his army unit. While he and his classmates may not have much in common besides their national pride, Pierre knows that by following the teachings of the scriptures, he will be someone they can respect because of and not in spite of his beliefs. ■



MORE ABOUT PIERRE

What foods do you like to eat?

I like the Breton galette (a waffle-like dish from western France). I also like bread, cheese, sausage, and pâté.

What do you do in your spare time?

I like to go out with my friends. Sometimes we just go out to eat and talk. I like to go shopping with my wife or go to the movies. I also like to read and play sports. I especially like running and swimming.

What's dating like in France?

It's complicated to go out with a girl just as friends, unless the girl knows how people date in the United States: going out together to get to know each other and just become friends. Church leaders try to have lots of single-adult activities because that allows us to meet people and have one massive group date—that's how my wife and I met.

THE CHURCH IN FRANCE

37,812 Latter-day Saints

107 wards and branches

67 family history centers

2 missions

1 temple (under construction)

FRANCE: BY THE NUMBERS

66 million people (estimate as of 2015)

40,000 châteaux (medieval castles, manors, palaces)

80 million tourists visit France each year—the most visited country in the world



An Eternal Perspective on Personal and Family Finance

By **Bryan Sudweeks**, PhD, Chartered Financial Analyst,
and **E. Jeffrey Hill**, PhD, Brigham Young University

Our financial house must be built on a firm foundation to withstand the rains of recession, the floods of layoffs, and the winds of high interest rates. Part of this foundation comes from viewing and managing our finances from an eternal perspective rather than the world's materialistic perspective. The eternal perspective assumes that all material resources are owned by God and that we are responsible to use those resources to bless His children. The world's materialistic perspective is any other perspective that takes God out of the equation. The perspective you choose makes a big difference in the way you manage your money and your life.

In this article we will share an eternal perspective on the whys, whats, and hows of managing finances.

Managing money can be tricky, especially when you are starting your family and career, but it's easier if you understand the whys, whats, and hows of finance.

Why Learn about Finance?

1. *Spiritual: To bring us to Christ.*

Because God's work and glory is to bring to pass the "immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39) and the only way we can have eternal life is through Jesus Christ (see John 14:6), then the purpose of all mortal experience is to bring us to Christ. Learning to manage our finances

according to gospel principles will help us grow spiritually as well as help build up the kingdom of God.

2. *Temporal: To help us become wise in our use of resources.*

Managing resources is a skill that Heavenly Father wants us to develop during mortality. "For he who is faithful and wise in time is accounted worthy to inherit the mansions prepared for him of my Father" (D&C 72:4).

3. *Individual: To accomplish our divine missions.*

We all have sacred missions to perform here on earth as part of our "divine nature and destiny."¹ Many of our missions will require material resources. As we are faithful in managing our finances, we can acquire resources that we can then consecrate to the work God has for us to do.



4. Family: To return with our families back to Heavenly Father's presence.

An eternal perspective on finances can prepare us for eternal marriage, strengthen existing marriages, and be a conduit for positive parenting. President David O. McKay (1873–1970) reminded us, “No other success can compensate for failure in the home.”² We will be disappointed in life if we gain the riches of the world and lose our families (see Matthew 16:26).

What Are the Foundations of This Perspective?

Principle 1: Ownership

The Psalmist wrote, “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1). The Lord is the Creator of worlds and all things therein (see John 1:3; D&C 93:10), the supplier of our breath, the giver of our knowledge (see Moses 7:32), the giver of our life, and the giver of all we have and are (see Mosiah 2:21–25). Nothing we have is our own—it is all God’s. As such, there should be no feeling of pride or

ownership for the things He blesses us with.

Principle 2: Responsibility

Because God owns everything, we have a responsibility to use these resources for His purposes. We first meet the needs and appropriate wants of our families and then consecrate the rest to bless God’s other children. Being blessed with material things in life should be seen not only as a blessing but also as a responsibility, “for of him unto whom much is given much is required” (D&C 82:3).

Principle 3: Agency

President Thomas S. Monson taught: “When we came to the earth, we brought with us that great gift from God—even our agency. In thousands of ways we are privileged to choose for ourselves.”³ How we use that gift in managing our finances is one way we show what we believe and how much we love Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Principle 4: Accountability

The first three principles outlined above are God’s gifts to us. The principle of accountability can be our gift to God to show how much we love Him through our obedience.

How Can We Best Apply These Financial Principles?

1. Pay the Lord first in tithes and offerings.

Tithing is the primary law upon which financial blessings are predicated. If we pay tithing and are generous with fast and other offerings, we are promised that the windows of heaven will be opened (see Malachi 3:10). Paying tithing is a reflection of our faith.

2. Create and use a budget.

Prophets have counseled that everyone should have a budget.⁴ Budgeting is the process of pondering, planning, setting goals, and following through on our financial plans and goals. If you are married, you can develop your budget with your spouse. Most budgets include a monthly plan for expenditures by category (such as tithing, investments, food, housing, clothing, insurance, medical expenses, cars, entertainment, and so on) and then an annual budget for other planned expenses, such as Christmas, vacations, and birthdays. The total expenses should be less than the net income.

It is important to review expenses regularly, perhaps weekly, to assess the current status of the budget. When followed, a well-designed budget helps keep us out of debt. You can find sample budgets on numerous Internet sites, including [lds.org/topics/family-finance](https://www.lds.org/topics/family-finance) and personalfinance.byu.edu, and on many apps.

3. Avoid debt.

We have repeatedly been counseled to avoid debt wherever possible. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught: “The Lord desires his Saints to be free and independent in the critical days ahead. But no man is truly free who is in financial bondage.”⁵ And President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) urged Church members: “Be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from bondage.”⁶

The only exceptions to this counsel are debt for a modest home, for education, and perhaps for basic transportation.⁷ Consumer debt—that is, debt for lifestyle items like

clothes, electronics, vacations, and so on—should be avoided.

If you are in debt, follow a debt elimination plan and cut spending wherever possible.

Learn and apply responsible use of credit cards—such as regularly paying them off and only spending money you have. If they cause too great a temptation to spend, perform what Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles called “plastic surgery” and cut up your cards.⁸ However, don’t close the accounts, as simply having your accounts open (even if they are not being used) can help build your credit score over time.

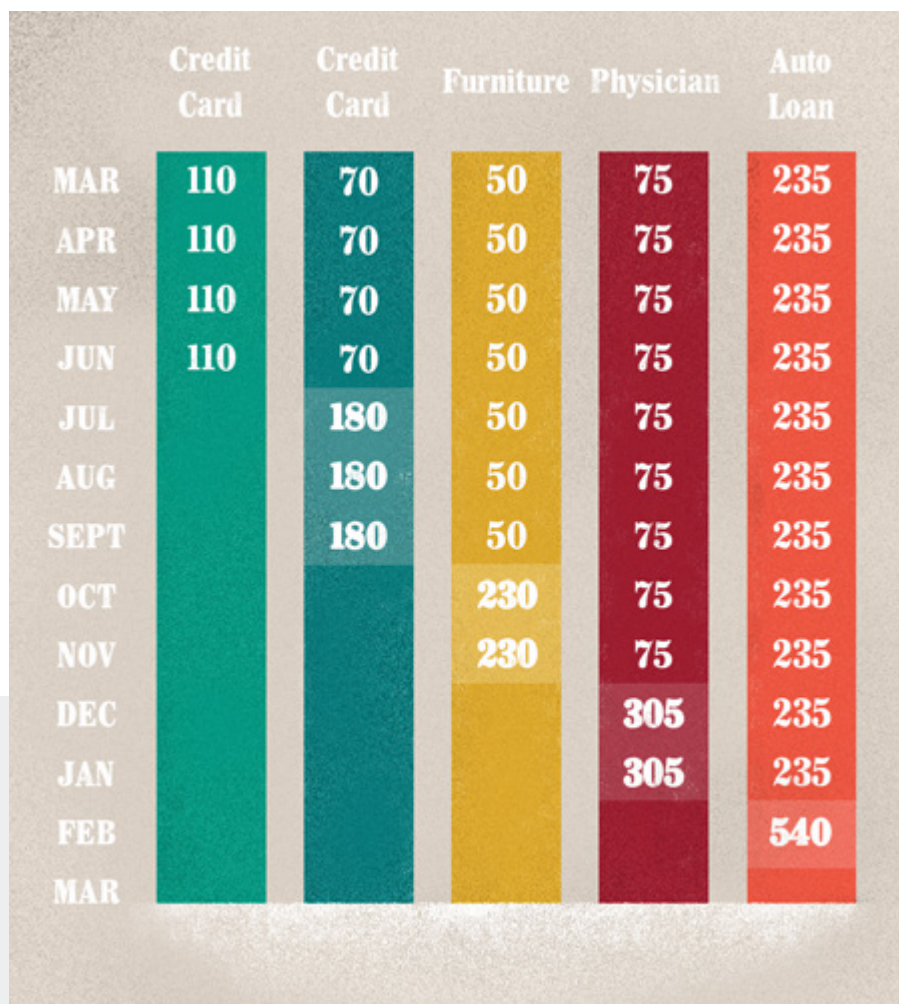
4. Prepare for emergencies and build a financial reserve.

Most financial planners recommend having three to six months’ worth of living expenses set aside in an easily accessible savings or money market account as a cushion for unexpected financial difficulties. That money is ready to be used when truly needed: in case of a lost job, medical bills, unplanned home or car repairs, travel to a funeral, and so on.

5. Save for short- and long-term expenses.

After a reserve is built, you can begin saving for short- and long-term goals. Some short-term goals may include purchasing a vehicle or

Build a Debt Snowball: Pay off one debt as fast as possible and then use the money that is freed up from that first debt to pay off the next and so on until all your loans are paid off.



buying furniture. It is gratifying to save and sacrifice for these goals.

Many couples set the goal to own their own home. It is appropriate to borrow for a modest home, but be cautious. A mortgage will likely be your largest financial obligation and will impact your budget and finances until the day it is paid off. Shorter-term mortgages (say, 15 or 20 years as opposed to 30 years) require much less debt to be paid over time.

Saving for retirement is another long-term goal. If your employer offers a matching contribution to a retirement fund, it is wise to contribute at least enough to get the full match. If your employer does not offer a retirement plan, you can establish your own long-term savings and retirement plans. You may also want to save for missions and education for your children.

Begin to invest now while you have time on your side. The sooner you start investing, the greater your money will grow. Albert Einstein supposedly said: “Compound interest is the eighth wonder of the world. He who understands it, earns it. . . . He who doesn’t, pays it.”⁹

Where possible, invest in tax-advantaged, primarily stock-based, diversified mutual funds consistent with your ability to tolerate risk. Invest for the long term and don’t try to time the market.

6. Protect yourself and your family through adequate insurance.

Without insurance, major financial setbacks could wipe out decades of savings. Adequate insurance that protects major investments provides peace of mind.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

counseled: “It is most important to have sufficient medical, automobile, and homeowner’s insurance and an adequate life insurance program. Costs associated with illness, accident, and death may be so large that uninsured families can be financially burdened for many years.”¹⁰

Once you have someone who is dependent upon you for income, consider getting life insurance. The goal is to have enough insurance to replace your income for long enough to raise your children and for your spouse to be financially self-sufficient. Some financial planners recommend 10–15 times your gross annual salary. In general, term life insurance is preferable to permanent life insurance.

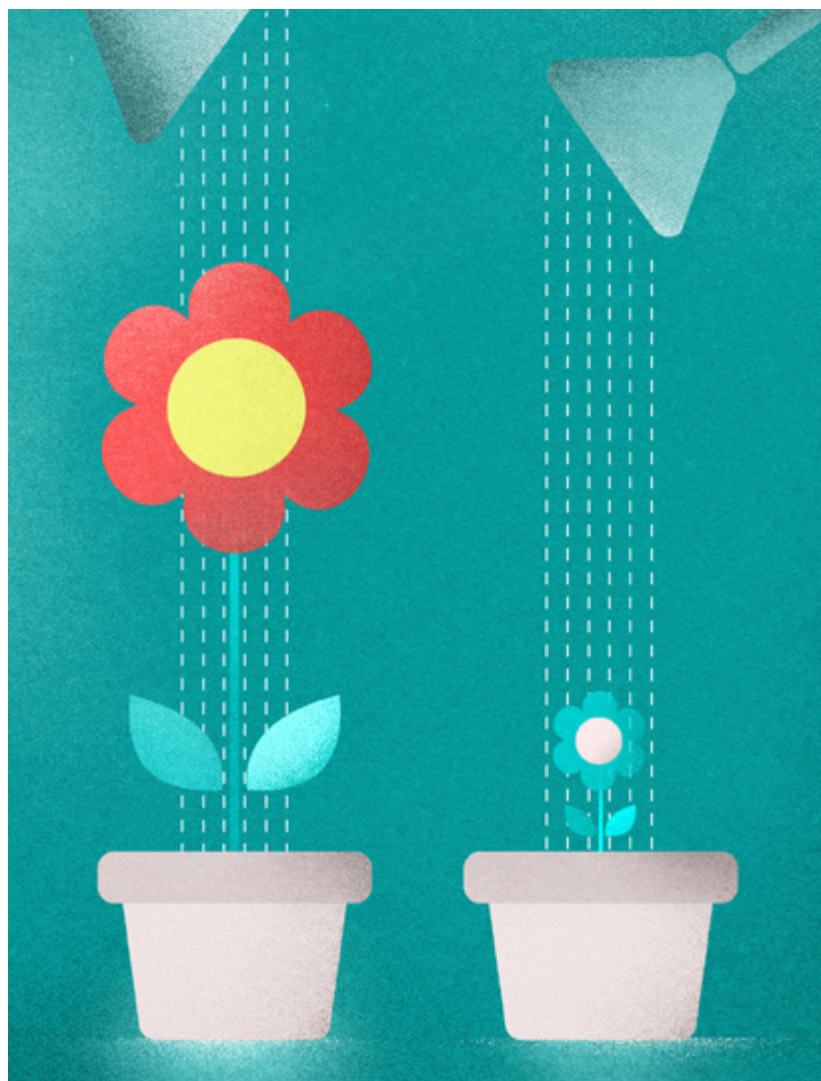
Summary

Understanding the doctrine, principles, and application of financial management is critical. With every dollar we spend, we choose which perspective we take—either the eternal perspective or the world’s materialistic perspective. God prepares a way for us to obey His commandments concerning our finances (see 1 Nephi 3:7). With this eternal perspective, you lay up for yourselves true “treasure in heaven” (Helaman 5:8) as you plan for and begin your careers and families. ■

Note: As you make large financial decisions, it is important to obtain adequate and accurate information before prayerfully making a decision. Many books, websites (such as [lds.org/topics/family-finance](https://www.lds.org/topics/family-finance) and [personalfinance.byu.edu](https://www.personalfinance.byu.edu)), and experienced financial advisers can help you with these decisions.



Check the Terms of Loans: Couple A chooses a 30-year mortgage for their new home. Couple B chooses a 15-year mortgage. Even with the same interest rates, couple A pays more than twice as much in interest as couple B over the life of the loan.



Start Investing Early: From age 25 to 65, investor A saves \$100 per month earning 6 percent interest and ends up with \$199,000. From age 35 to 65, investor B saves \$100 per month earning 6 percent interest and ends up with \$110,000.

NOTES

1. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay* (2003), 154.
3. Thomas S. Monson, "Ponder the Path of Thy Feet," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 86.
4. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 198; L. Tom Perry, "Becoming Self-Reliant," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 66.
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 271.
6. Gordon B. Hinckley, "To the Boys and to the Men," *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 54.
7. See Robert D. Hales, "Becoming Provident Providers Temporally and Spiritually," *Ensign*, May 2009, 7.
8. See Jeffrey R. Holland and Patricia T. Holland, "Things We Have Learned—Together," *Ensign*, June 1986, 30.
9. Albert Einstein, www.goodreads.com/quotes/76863-compound-interest-is-the-eighth-wonder-of-the-world-he.
10. Marvin J. Ashton, *One for the Money: Guide to Family Finance* (booklet, 2006), 10.

LEARNING THE FINANCIAL JARGON

This brief glossary defines some of the terms in this article that might be new to you.

Diversified investments: Investing your money in many different types of assets—such as stocks, bonds, real estate, commodities, precious metals—in order to minimize risk (don't put all of your eggs in one basket).

Life insurance: Term life insurance covers the insured person for a certain period of time, such as 20 years. It typically costs less than permanent life insurance, which covers the insured for his or her lifetime and includes an investment component.

Matching contribution (in a retirement investment, such as a 401k): For every dollar employees contribute, employers contribute the same amount or a certain percentage to the employee's retirement plan.

Risk tolerance: Your psychological disposition to handle the ups and downs of the financial markets without undue stress.

Tax-advantaged investments: Funds where you can invest your money and pay fewer taxes. Some common options allow you to deduct your investment from your taxable income (such as traditional IRA's/401k's) or allow you to accumulate gains without ever paying taxes (such as with Roth IRA's/401k's or tax-exempt bonds).

Timing the market: The difficult-to-implement practice of trying to buy stock when its price is low and sell it when the price is high. A better approach is *dollar-cost averaging*—investing a set amount on a regular basis.

Elder Dale G. Renlund

AN OBEDIENT SERVANT



Opposite page: Elder Renlund and his siblings (Anita, Linda, and Gary) grew up in Utah, speaking Swedish. Their parents, Åke and Mariana, moved from Sweden to Utah in 1950 to be sealed in the temple because there was no temple in Scandinavia or Europe at the time. Right: Elder and Sister Renlund and their daughter, Ashley, lived for six years in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, where he completed his medical residency and cardiology fellowship at Johns Hopkins Hospital and Sister Renlund attended the University of Maryland School of Law.

By Elder Quentin L. Cook
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Life couldn't get any busier for Dale and Ruth Renlund. They were in their late 20s, living in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. Dale had completed medical school at the University of Utah. He and Ruth had moved across the country so he could undertake a demanding and prestigious medical residency at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. They had a beautiful young daughter, Ashley. His precious wife, Ruth, was undergoing cancer treatments, and Dale had obediently accepted a call to serve as bishop.

As he visited ward members, Dale sometimes took Ashley with him. One day they visited a less-active member. "I knew that no one would be able to turn away this adorable little girl at my side," remembers Elder Renlund. He knocked on the door of a man who had angrily dismissed Bishop Renlund's counselor sometime earlier.

When the man opened the door, he was so large he filled the door frame. He glared at Bishop Renlund. Four-year-old Ashley blurted out, "Well, can we come in or what?"

Surprisingly, the man said, "I guess so. Come in."

When they were seated inside, the man told Bishop Renlund he did not believe the Church was true, nor did he believe in Jesus Christ. He kept talking angrily while Ashley played with a toy. Finally she got off her chair, cupped her hand to her father's ear, and whispered loudly, "Daddy, tell him the truth."

So he did. Bishop Renlund bore his testimony to the man. He recalls, "The man's attitude softened, and the Spirit came into his home."

Now as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Renlund has the opportunity to tell the whole world the truth (see D&C 107:23). "The greatest joy that comes," says Elder Renlund, "is helping to bring the Atonement of Christ into the lives of people everywhere. I think this calling

gives me the opportunity to do that on a bigger scale, in more places, as a witness of Christ to all the world."





Elder Renlund's sister Linda C. Maurer, who is nine years younger than him, states that as all four of the children have grown older, "they realize how remarkable and faithful their parents were to uproot with no English-speaking skills and little support in order to have the blessings of the gospel and a temple marriage."



Nordic Upbringing

Dale Gunnar Renlund was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, on November 13, 1952. He and his siblings grew up speaking Swedish. Their mother, Mariana Andersson, was from Sweden, and their father, Mats Åke Renlund, was from a Swedish-speaking town in western Finland. They immigrated from Sweden to Utah in 1950.

Dale's parents met at church in Stockholm. After deciding to marry, they were determined to do so only in a temple. Because there were no temples in Europe at the time (the Bern Switzerland Temple was dedicated in 1955), the couple came to Utah so they could be sealed in the Salt Lake Temple.



When Dale was 11, his father, a skilled carpenter and builder, was called to serve as a building missionary in Sweden for three years. The family spent time in Helsinki, Finland, and Gothenburg, Sweden. They attended a small branch of the Church, and the children attended Swedish public schools. Dale's sister Anita M. Renlund, who is one year younger than her brother, recalls one of the difficulties in the transition: "This was initially a shock to us because, even though we spoke Swedish at home, we did not know the grammar or spelling of the language."

As a boy Dale had a testimony-strengthening experience after reading the Book of Mormon. The mission president in Sweden had invited the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood to read the Book of Mormon, so Dale's older brother, Gary, who was 12 at the time, accepted the challenge. Eleven-year-old Dale also took the challenge. After reading the Book of Mormon, he prayed and asked if it was true. Elder Renlund recalls, "I had a distinct impression:



With his wife and daughter, Elder Renlund spoke at the 2016 RootsTech family history conference in Salt Lake City. Opposite page: Married in the Salt Lake Temple in 1977, Elder and Sister Renlund have served the Lord wherever and whenever they have been called.



‘I’ve been telling you all along that it’s true.’ And that was an amazing experience.”

Dale and his siblings—Gary, Anita, and Linda—remember that when the family moved back to the United States, they continued to speak and pray in Swedish. They also recall their parents’ remarkable emphasis on scripture knowledge. They say, “The best way to make a point with our parents was by using scriptures.” Anita jokes, “Knowing the scriptures in our family was a survival skill; it was not optional.”

Remarkably, both Gary and Dale were called to serve in the Swedish Mission at the same time. They were never companions, but both were able to use their Swedish-speaking skills to serve the Lord as missionaries for over two years. Elder Renlund describes his mission as a lot of work but a wonderful experience: “It was life-changing in terms of commitment and deciding to do the best one can to be a disciple of Christ.”

The Most Amazing Blessing

After returning from his mission in 1974, Dale attended the University of Utah. He was an excellent student and received a bachelor’s degree in chemistry. His siblings and close friends all remember his capability, focus, hard work, and commitment in every undertaking—traits he continues to exhibit. Gary exclaims, “He is the hardest worker I have ever seen.”

In his ward Dale met a young woman named Ruth. She was the daughter of a member of the stake presidency, Merlin R. Lybbert, who later served in the Seventy. Dale’s recollection is that he mustered the courage to ask Ruth out on a date, but she said no. When he tried again a few months later, she said yes. Ruth’s version is a little different. She remembers that when he spoke in sacrament meeting about his mission, she was impressed. They got better acquainted, and she was thrilled when he asked her to go on a date, but she was hosting a party that required her to decline. She was pleased to accept when he asked again.

Dale and Ruth married in 1977 in the Salt Lake Temple while he was attending medical school at the University of Utah and she was teaching at South High School, also in Salt Lake City. “Aside from the decision to be active in the Church,” Elder Renlund unequivocally states, “marrying Ruth has been the most amazing thing in my life.” Their daughter, Ashley, was born one week after Elder Renlund graduated from medical school in 1980.

Elder Renlund was then pleased to be accepted by Johns Hopkins Hospital, his first choice for his continuing medical education.

The family moved to Baltimore, Maryland, where he became part of the hospital medical staff.

Growing through Trials

In October 1981, Sister Renlund was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She underwent two surgeries and nine months of chemotherapy. Elder Renlund recalls struggling as he took care of Ruth and their daughter. “I was hurting, and it seemed as if my prayers wouldn’t go heavenward.”

When he brought Ruth home from the hospital, she was weak, but they wanted to pray together. He asked Sister Renlund if she would pray. “Her first words were, ‘Our Father in Heaven, we thank Thee for priesthood power that makes it so that no matter what happens, we can be together forever.’”

In that moment, he felt a special closeness to his wife and to God. “What I’d previously understood about eternal families in my mind, I now understood in my heart,” Elder Renlund says. “Ruth’s illness changed the course of our lives.”

To take her mind off the illness, Sister Renlund decided to attend law school. “I just thought, ‘This will only be a bad experience unless we make something good of it,’” Sister Renlund says. “It wasn’t in our plan for me to have cancer as a young woman and have only one child. And my survival was in doubt. But we felt like law school was the right thing.”

She pursued her studies even as she continued treatment for her illness and her husband continued his residency.

Baltimore’s Inner-City Bishop

As Elder Renlund was transitioning from three years on the medical house staff to a cardiology fellowship, he was interviewed to be the bishop of the Baltimore Ward. Brent Petty, who

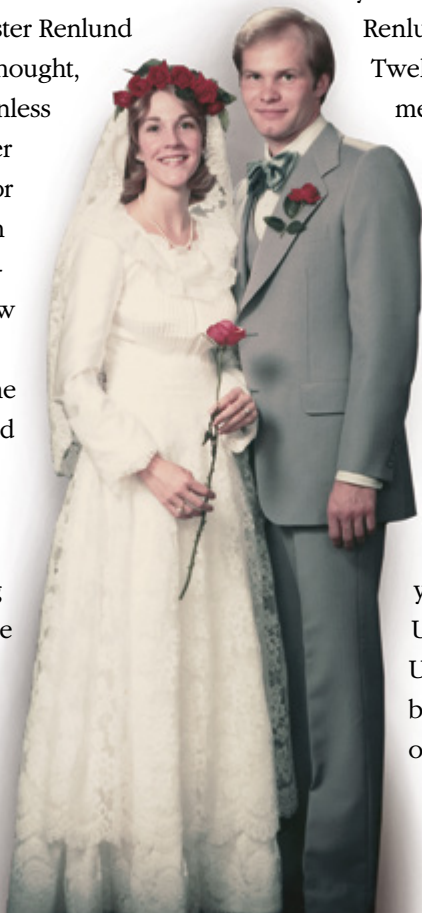


was the first counselor in the Baltimore Maryland Stake at the time, remembers that interview. Both he and the stake president, Stephen P. Shipley, felt “the strong influence of the Holy Spirit” as they interviewed him.

Brother Petty recalls that “he distinguished himself as a superb bishop,” even with the professional and family challenges he was experiencing. When Elder Renlund received his call to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles last year, Brother Petty notes, members of the Baltimore Ward as well as Elder Renlund’s medical colleagues, most of whom are not Latter-day Saints, were pleased. They expressed their love for him and their admiration for his service and exceptional moral character.

Distinguished Careers

In 1986, after Sister Renlund graduated from the University of Maryland School of Law and Elder Renlund completed his three-year internal medicine residency program and three-year cardiology fellowship, they returned to Utah. Sister Renlund began practicing law at the Utah attorney general’s office, and Elder Renlund became a professor of medicine at the University of Utah. For 18 years he was the medical



Elder Renlund left his successful medical career as a cardiologist to accept a call to serve as a General Authority, first assigned to the Africa Southeast Area Presidency. Opposite page: When Elder Renlund saw this Heinrich Hofmann painting of the Savior in President Monson's office, he knew he wanted a copy for his own office.

director of the Utah Transplantation Affiliated Hospitals Cardiac Transplant Program.

In 2000 he also became the director of the Heart Failure Prevention and Treatment Program at Intermountain Health Center in Salt Lake City. The program included implantable cardiac pumps and the total artificial heart. Donald B. Doty, M.D., an internationally recognized heart surgeon, was a colleague and friend of Dr. Renlund at LDS Hospital. Dr. Doty says, "His remarkable training, in-depth focus, capable administration, and compassion were exceptional."

Dr. A. G. Kfoury, a devout Catholic who worked closely with Dr. Renlund for many years, states that Dr. Renlund was the lead transplant cardiologist in the region, "unmatched in his character, integrity, humility, and compassion." He says Dr. Renlund "brought out the best in people. He

did it quietly. He listened well and cared, and he was immensely interested in the success of those who worked with him." Dr. Renlund led quietly by example and was always concerned about the families of his co-workers.

Dr. Kfoury particularly notes Dr. Renlund's compassion for patients. For example, if a patient didn't have means of transportation, Dr. Renlund would drive significant distances to the patient's home, lift him or her into his car, and then drive the patient back to the hospital. Dr. Kfoury says this was extraordinary.

Serving in the Seventy

After serving as stake president for five years in the Salt Lake University First Stake, Elder Renlund was called in 2000 to serve as an Area Seventy in the Utah Area. Then in April 2009 he was called to be a General Authority Seventy. His first assignment was to serve in the Africa Southeast

Area Presidency, an area that has Church units in 25 different countries.

Sister Renlund shares their response to the calling: "It was a surprise, of course. And people have said, 'You're leaving your careers at their peaks.' And that's probably true. But if the Lord needs the peak of our careers and this is when we can be of service, then that's the time to go."

Speaking of his wife as his hero, Elder Renlund says, "She made the greater





Called to Be a Special Witness

On September 29, 2015, he received an unexpected call from the Office of the First Presidency. At the Church Administration Building, “I was welcomed warmly by President Thomas S. Monson and his two

sacrifice.” Sister Renlund left her job as the president of her law firm and left positions on several prominent boards to serve with him. “We were sent to Africa and tutored by the Saints about what really matters,” says Elder Renlund.

One Sunday in central Congo he asked the members what challenges they were facing, but they couldn’t think of any challenges. He asked again. Finally, an old gentleman in the back of the room stood and said, “Elder Renlund, how can we have any challenges? We have the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Reflecting on that experience, Elder Renlund explains: “I want to be like these Congolese Saints, who pray for food every day, are grateful every day for food, are grateful for their families. They have nothing, but they have everything.”

Serving in the Area Presidency for five years, Elder Renlund traveled thousands of miles through the vast Africa Southeast Area, visiting members and missionaries. He studied French because it is spoken in several of those countries.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, who was the member of the Twelve assigned to work with the Africa Southeast Area Presidency at the time, says of Elder Renlund: “No one could have invested himself in the area and its people and their needs more than Elder Renlund did. He labored unceasingly to know the people, to love their cultures, and to help move the Saints toward a place of redeeming light.”

counselors. After we were seated, President Monson looked at me, and he said, ‘Brother Renlund, we extend to you the call to serve as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.’”

Elder Renlund was stunned. He humbly accepted the calling and recalls, “I think President Monson sensed that my bones had dissolved, and so he looked at me, and he said, ‘God called you; the Lord made it known to me.’”

Elder Renlund returned to his office, closed the door, and fell to his knees in prayer. After collecting himself, he called his wife. “Her reaction was one of astonishment,” he says, “but of absolute commitment to the Lord, His Church, and to me.”

Their daughter, Ashley, acknowledges, “My dad has excelled because of the blessing of heaven and has been prepared by a lifetime of service for this call. He has a big heart; it is full of love.”

Similarly, Elder Renlund’s brother, Gary, says Elder Renlund “was prepared from a long time ago, both by challenges and by service for the call that has come to him. This is part of the larger plan that is in place, and it is easy for me to sustain him.”

Reflecting on the magnitude of the calling, Elder Renlund says, “I don’t feel qualified, with the exception that I do know that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. I can witness of His living reality, that He is my Savior and your Savior. I know that that’s true.” ■



LIKE THE WIDOW
OF ZAREPHATH:
**The Miracle of
Fast Offerings**

*As we considered giving a more
generous fast offering, we remembered
that a person cannot give a crust to the
Lord without receiving a loaf in return.*

By Po Nien (Felipe) Chou and Petra Chou

Many families throughout the world struggle financially, especially during times of economic crisis.¹ The impact of such a crisis was felt in our local ward several years ago, as we saw several families in need of assistance. At the beginning of that year, our bishop shared with us an invitation from our stake president to give a generous fast offering to help those in need.

Although our leaders asked us to look at our individual situations and consider if we were able to be more generous with our fast offerings, they did not specify how much we should give. However, the Spirit reminded us of the counsel given years ago by President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), First Counselor in the First Presidency. He said: “I am a firm believer that you cannot give to the Church and to the building up of the kingdom of God and be any poorer financially. . . . A person could not give a crust to the Lord without receiving a loaf in return. That’s been my experience. If the members of the Church would double their fast-offering contributions, the spirituality in the Church would double. We need to keep that in mind and be liberal in our contributions.”²

We knew it would be a sacrifice for our family to increase our fast offerings, but we considered President Romney's teaching and promise carefully. As a family, we had been blessed abundantly and we felt a strong desire to increase our fast offerings.

Moreover, we wanted our family to overcome the tendency to be selfish. Because we live in a society so focused on acquiring things and filling our own desires, we were concerned that our children might grow up selfish. But we had hope in President Spencer W. Kimball's (1895–1985) words: "Upon practicing the law of the fast, one finds a personal well-spring of power to overcome self-indulgence and selfishness."³

Within the first three months of giving a more generous fast offering, we began to see many blessings. We were able to spend less on groceries, and our gas tank seemed to stay full longer. Our children asked for fewer things, and the selfishness in our home almost disappeared.

For example, when we contributed to the local food drive, our children began encouraging us to give more. When we did our annual inventory of our food supply, we found that we actually had two years' worth of food. Additionally, in the past it would take us one month to go through a 50-pound (22.7 kg) bag of rice. Now the same bag of rice lasted us two months. It seemed like our food storage was multiplying.

We were reminded of the story of the widow of Zarephath. During a time of famine, the prophet Elijah called upon a widow, who had no means to feed him, to provide him with water and bread. Her response was, "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die" (1 Kings 17:12).

The prophet promised her that "the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail. . . .

"And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days"

(1 Kings 17:14–15). Her barrel, which had enough for one last meal for her family, was multiplied to allow her family and others to eat many days. The same type of miracle—based on our own offering—was occurring in our family.

During financial difficulties, giving a generous fast offering and helping care for the needy can be difficult, particularly when we are—like the widow of Zarephath—among the needy. Giving a generous fast offering, no matter the amount, requires faith in the Lord and His promise to care for us. But the Lord fulfills His promises, and our family's experience taught us that the more we are willing to share, the more we are blessed.

As President Romney said: "Don't give just for the benefit of the poor, but give for your own welfare. Give enough so that you can give yourself into the kingdom of God through consecrating of your means and your time."⁴ Giving a more generous fast offering helped our family find joy in caring for the poor and strength in our own spiritual welfare.

Our willingness to give a crust has brought us many loaves in return. Our willingness to give generous fast offerings more than doubled our food storage. Indeed, the Lord's power to multiply five loaves and two fishes to feed 5,000 men, besides women and children, with enough fragments to fill 12 baskets (see Matthew 14:16–21), is the same power that filled the barrel for the widow of Zarephath and multiplied our family's food storage. Still, our greatest benefit has not come in the form of multiplying food but in the decrease of selfishness and increase of spirituality in our home.

It is our witness that as we contribute generously to the fast-offering funds of the Church, including when our means are limited, the Lord will magnify our efforts and bless us beyond our understanding. ■

The authors live in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Henry B. Eyring, "Is Not This the Fast That I Have Chosen?" *Ensign*, May 2015, 22–25.
2. Marion G. Romney, Welfare Agricultural Meeting, Apr. 3, 1971, 1.
3. Spencer W. Kimball, "Becoming the Pure in Heart," *Ensign*, May 1978, 80.
4. Marion G. Romney, "The Blessings of the Fast," *Ensign*, July 1982, 4.



FASTING: CHERISH YOUR SACRED PRIVILEGE

"I bear witness of the miracles, both spiritual and temporal, that come to those who live the law of the fast. I bear witness of the miracles that have come to me. Truly, as Isaiah recorded, I have cried out in the fast more than once, and truly God has responded, 'Here I am' (Isaiah 58:9). Cherish that sacred privilege at least monthly, and be as generous as circumstances permit in your fast offering and other humanitarian, educational, and missionary contributions. I promise that God will be generous to you, and those who find relief at your hand will call your name blessed forever."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Are We Not All Beggars?"
Ensign, Nov. 2014, 42.

MY ADOPTED PIONEER ANCESTORS

*I can still
recall little
details from
my first trip
to Church
history sites.*

By Cynthia Woo

Over the past several years, I have enjoyed making trips to visit Church history sites in the midwestern United States. The first time I saw some of these sites was as an investigator in December 1997. I had driven from California in the winter because I wanted to know more about these Mormons I was learning about from the missionaries.

I had no family in the Church and no ties to anyone who had lived in Kirtland, Ohio, or in Far West, Missouri. Nor was I related to anyone who had crossed the Mississippi River to escape persecution or who had camped at Council Bluffs, Iowa. During those pioneer times, my ancestors came from the opposite direction, traveling east, and may have helped lay the railroad tracks from California to Promontory Point in what is now the state of Utah.

I can still recall little details from my first trip to Church history sites.

Nauvoo, Illinois

My first view of Nauvoo was after dark, when I saw the grassy expanse where the original Nauvoo Temple stood. This was about a year before President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) announced that the temple would be rebuilt. I walked around in sub-freezing temperatures to look at the engraved stone exhibits and the sunstone that was once a part of the temple.

I loved walking around historic Nauvoo on those cold, snowy days and seeing how the city looked in the 1840s. I could imagine what life was like then. I especially liked seeing the graves of the Prophet Joseph Smith, his wife Emma, and his brother Hyrum. I felt the Spirit as I read some of the hundreds of pioneer names inscribed on the walls of a circular monument at Parley's Landing. I wondered how the Saints felt when they bade farewell to the temple and entrusted themselves and all they owned to God as they crossed the frozen river that He had miraculously provided.







Carthage Jail

I sat in my car outside Carthage Jail for about 10 minutes after the tour, gathering my thoughts. I was the only visitor on the tour that frigid day, and the missionary guides asked me the question I was accustomed to hearing: “Are you a member of our church?” My usual answer was that I was investigating and still learning. This time my reply was different but came out in a totally natural way. “Not yet,” I said. Obviously I still didn’t know if I would become a member, but Heavenly Father did.

Winter Quarters Cemetery

Standing in the cold of the cemetery at Winter Quarters with the statue of forlorn parents who had to bury their child, I shed tears for the hundreds of people who left Nauvoo but died before they reached Zion.



Crossing the Plains

I crossed Iowa, Nebraska, and Wyoming in a field of white snow, and crosswinds buffeted the car. I had adequate food and fuel, along with radio weather reports and other conveniences the pioneers never had. I thought of their sacrifices.

An Heir of Pioneer Sacrifices

Now as a Latter-day Saint myself, when I visit Church history sites I honor the pioneers as a beneficiary and an heir to their sacrifices and suffering. I owe them an eternal debt of gratitude. Because of the grace of my Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and the faith and dedication of the pioneers in keeping their covenants and building Zion, I have been able to embrace the restored gospel, receive temple covenants, and offer those blessings to my ancestors through providing temple work for them.

I have been able to attend both the Nauvoo Illinois Temple and the Winter Quarters Nebraska Temple, which overlook the places sanctified by sacrifice.

After a session at the Winter Quarters Temple, I walked through the cemetery and stopped for a moment of meditation. Someone nearby, probably not initially noticing my non-European features, asked if I had ancestors there. I felt both a tear and a smile on my face as I replied, “These are my adopted ancestors.” ■

The author lives in California, USA.



PIONEER LEGACY AND MODERN-DAY PIONEERS

“I love and honor the faith and courage of those early pioneers of the Church. My own ancestors were living an ocean away at the time. None were among those who lived in Nauvoo or Winter Quarters, and none made the journey across the plains. But as a member of the Church, I claim with gratitude and pride this pioneer legacy as my own.

“With the same joy, I claim the legacies of today’s modern-day Church pioneers who live in every nation and whose own stories of perseverance, faith, and sacrifice add glorious new verses to the great chorus of the latter-day anthem of the kingdom of God.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Faith of Our Father,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 70.



The Heavens Are Opened

The New Church History Museum Exhibit

Visiting this remarkable, highly interactive permanent exhibit makes Church history come alive.

By Alan D. Johnson

Director, Church History Museum

From watching a movie depicting the First Vision on a 220-degree circular screen to seeing the string that kept the original manuscript of the translated Book of Mormon tied together, we can be transported back in time again and again as we walk through the new exhibit in the Church History Museum in Salt Lake City (an online and mobile experience is also available at history.lds.org/section/museum).

Titled *The Heavens Are Opened*, this exhibit sets forth the revelations and events that make up the early history of the restored Church of Jesus Christ, from its beginning through the Saints' exodus from Nauvoo. It is divided into several primary areas, each with its own theme and message.

Religious Awakenings and the Smith Family

Here we meet the Smith family and learn how the historical context of the spiritual awakenings in New York led young Joseph Smith to James 1:5 in the Bible, followed by his prayer in a grove of trees and





Above: Experience the First Vision as if you were there. From left: Learn of the great religious awakenings during that time; see Joseph Smith's family history; share Church history with your children using interactive screens; see original documents, such as these notes for a Presbyterian minister's sermon that Joseph may have heard not long before the First Vision.



Right: View art that captures the opening of the heavens in the Kirtland Temple in 1836. From top: Follow Joseph Smith as he receives and translates the Book of Mormon; see a replica of the golden plates and of the log where Joseph hid them (children are welcome to play); view the actual press on which the Book of Mormon was printed; learn more about 19th-century printing through transfer rubbing and other activities.

*The visions and blessings
and angels are coming*



...of old are returning
...to visit the earth.



the appearance to him of God the Father and Jesus Christ. Here we experience a dramatic reenactment of that vision in a circular theater with a 220-degree screen—certainly a highlight of our visit to this exhibit.

The Translation of the Book of Mormon

Here we see a replica of the golden plates, a page of the original translation of the Book of Mormon, and the press upon which the first copies of the Book of Mormon were printed.

The Restoration of the Gospel

Here we learn of the restoration and reorganization of Christ's Church on earth. We see artifacts from the Peter Whitmer home. Interactive touch screens connect us with other sites of the Restoration.

Ohio and Missouri

Here we learn of the growth of the Church in Kirtland, Ohio, and the simultaneous attempt by the Saints to establish Zion in Independence, Missouri. The Liberty Jail exhibit is roughly the same size and height as the cell where Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Caleb Baldwin, and others were held for over four months. We can stand in that low, small space and feel the cold air blowing on our legs.

Below (clockwise from top left): Look through the windows of the Newel K. Whitney store facade; place building models on a map of Independence, Missouri; stand in a replica of the Liberty Jail cell and discover why Joseph and others suffered there for more than four months.



...to my name,
...to dwell therein.

Attend Relief Society in pioneer times via a movie and hear from Emma Smith, Lucy Mack Smith, and others.

Spokes on a Wheel: Greater Nauvoo



Using the "References" section of the map, can you find:
Joseph Smith's home?
The temple lot?
The Red Brick Store?

With a partner, use the "References" section of the map to find the location of the following places in Nauvoo. Discuss the significance of each place in the history of the city.

1. The "References" section of the map lists the following places in Nauvoo. Discuss the significance of each place in the history of the city.



JOSEPH SMITH'S RED BRICK STORE

Joseph Smith's Red Brick Store was Nauvoo's civic center, general store, titling office, and Church headquarters. The large hall on the second floor was used by many groups, including the city council, members of the local Masonic Lodge, the University of the City of Nauvoo, and presidential elections. The store was the setting for several important events, such as Joseph's introduction of the temple endowment, his acceptance of the nomination for the presidency of the United States, and the organization of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo.

Nauvoo Female Relief Society
 Nauvoo Relief Society
 Headquarters of the Relief Society
 and other offices

In this brick, glass & stone building, Relief Society of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints met to help the poor, to visit the sick, and to administer to the widows. (Doctrine and Covenants 184:16)

Doctrine

Red Brick Wall

JOSEPH SMITH'S RED BRICK STORE

Joseph Smith's Red Brick Store was Nauvoo's civic center, general store, titling office, and Church headquarters. The large hall on the second floor was used by many groups, including the city council, members of the local Masonic Lodge, the University of the City of Nauvoo, and presidential elections. The store was the setting for several important events, such as Joseph's introduction of the temple endowment, his acceptance of the nomination for the presidency of the United States, and the organization of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo.

Nauvoo Female Relief Society
 Nauvoo Relief Society
 Headquarters of the Relief Society
 and other offices

In this brick, glass & stone building, the Relief Society of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints met to help the poor, to visit the sick, and to administer to the temporal needs of the community. 1842.

Doctrine

Red Brick Wall

JOSEPH SMITH'S RED BRICK STORE

Joseph Smith's Red Brick Store was Nauvoo's civic center, general store, titling office, and Church headquarters. The large hall on the second floor was used by many groups, including the city council, members of the local Masonic Lodge, the University of the City of Nauvoo, and presidential elections. The store was the setting for several important events, such as Joseph's introduction of the temple endowment, his acceptance of the nomination for the presidency of the United States, and the organization of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo.

Nauvoo Female Relief Society
 Nauvoo Relief Society Building
 Nauvoo, Illinois
 1841-1845

In this book, Ellen G. White outlines the history of the Nauvoo Relief Society, and the role of the Relief Society in the development of the Latter-day Saint community in Nauvoo, Illinois.

Doctrine

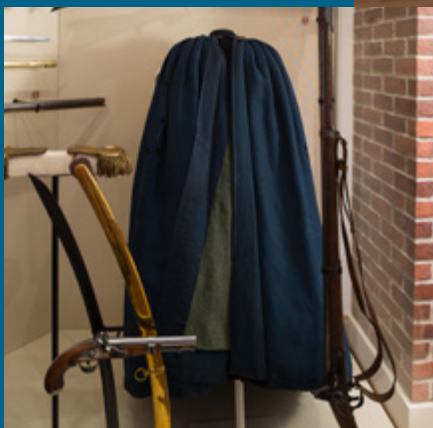
Red Brick Wall



Connecting Us with Church History

This new exhibit is an effort to provide more detail about and greater access to the history of the Church. While it is an exhibit rich in art and artifacts, there is an emphasis on storytelling to connect us with individual pioneers. Kiosks, interactive maps, and theater experiences are targeted to the youth of the Church and their families. The hope is that by visiting this exhibit, we will have spiritual experiences connecting us with the revelation and restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

Right: Through dramatic art, feel the emotion of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in Carthage Jail. Below: Reverently view the clothes Hyrum Smith wore when he died. Bottom, from left: Imagine the sacrifice of Joseph and Hyrum Smith as you view their death masks; see Nauvoo Legion items, including a pistol, sword, scabbard, cloak, and pair of epaulets owned by Joseph.





THE Teacher Council DIFFERENCE

One comment in one teacher council meeting changed more than my teaching.



Teacher council meetings are helping Sandra Cattell (center) improve her teaching abilities.

By Sandra Cattell

I'm fairly old, so when I was called to teach the young women, I thought, "My goodness! I wonder why they've called me?"

I put a lot of effort into preparing lessons appropriate for the young women's needs, and I hoped they would be willing to share what they learned and what they did with it during the week. But my questions were often met with silence.

In one of our ward's first teacher council meetings, one of the teachers said she too was finding it difficult to get

the youth to communicate during the lessons. Another teacher in the meeting said, "Well, you can allow silence, you see." Sometimes people need a little time to think about a question before answering.

That comment in teacher council meeting made a difference not only in the way I teach but for my students as well. I thought a lot about it. In my next Young Women lesson, I asked the class what gospel principle they had applied during the week. As usual, there was silence. But instead of immediately jumping in to fill the silence,

WHY TEACHER COUNCIL MEETINGS?

Because we are all children of God, anyone willing to learn and live the gospel can become more like our Heavenly Father. Teachers play an important role in how we learn and live the gospel.

To help teachers, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have invited wards and branches around the Church to adopt teacher council meetings. These monthly meetings allow teachers and leaders to learn together as they share ideas about teaching.

These meetings are new, but they are already having a positive impact on both teachers and learners. Below are comments from members who have come to appreciate and enjoy teacher council meetings:

- “Having a support system strengthens me. Sometimes as teachers we feel teaching is a one-person job. But that changes when there is a council and a forum to share struggles, thoughts, and feelings and get feedback from a group who understands the calling.”
—Preston Stratford
- “Teacher council meetings help me realize the significance of my efforts to facilitate learning.”
—Margaret Tueller



- “I’ve enjoyed obtaining ideas on how teachers can learn to better ‘teach people’ instead of ‘teach lessons.’”
—Richard Pattee
- “Discussing ways to improve how we ask questions and encourage more participation has been very beneficial. Being able to talk about successes and frustrations has given me insight as well.” —Ken Sonnenberg
- “This council has done a great job at teaching skills that will make us better teachers. If you are more skilled as a teacher, everyone in your class can benefit. While it is a teacher council, I feel like I’m growing spiritually as well.” —Brent Nelson
- “It has been a pleasure to be stretched in my thinking for improved teaching.” —Camille Fronk Olson

To learn more about teacher council meetings and *Teaching in the Savior’s Way*, visit teaching.lds.org.

I remembered our teacher council discussion and quietly said, “There’s no rush.”

The moment I said that, the conversation started to flow. The young women started to open up, and they shared some tender experiences. I immediately wanted to thank the teacher who had made that simple comment in teacher council meeting about silence. I was amazed how practicing that one principle had such a big difference so quickly.

But I didn’t realize until later what a difference that and other principles I’ve been learning are making. After church

the mother of one of the young women told me that her daughter had said she knows that I’ve been called of God.

I can’t tell you how special hearing that comment was to me. There I was thinking, “What have I got to teach these young women?” But I must be teaching them something. I’m called for a purpose, and teacher council meetings are helping me fulfill that purpose. ■

The author lives in Scotland.

To learn more about how you can help change lives by changing the way you teach, visit teaching.lds.org.

Understanding THE YOUTH YOU TEACH

*Making an effort to learn about the youth you teach
can unlock the door to their conversion.*

Many young people have enthusiasm and energy that can make teaching and mentoring them a delight. But some may also face challenges as they grow and mature—everything from adjusting to changes in their bodies, to stress at school, to cultural pressures that try to dissuade them from living the gospel. Youth need teachers who understand them and care about them. They need mentors who foster a safe environment for them to learn and act on what they learn.

Here are some things that may be helpful to know about youth as you plan, prepare, and teach them in the Savior's way:

1. *Youth want and need to learn the doctrine.* In a world that is moving further away from the standards of the gospel, youth are starving for eternal truth. They want to be taught “things as they really are, and of things as they really will be” (Jacob 4:13). These things are found in gospel doctrine. As you teach, focus on the doctrine found in the scriptures, the teachings of the living prophets and apostles, and other official Church materials. Encourage the youth to study these resources on their own. Doctrine has a powerful effect (see Alma 31:5).

2. *Youth are establishing their identity.* They are trying to figure out who they are and who they want to become. As they prepare for future roles, they may wonder what the Lord has planned for them and if they will be able to do all that is expected of them. As a parent or teacher, you can inspire confidence about the future and give guidance in preparing for it. Help them grow closer to

God and build their lives on the standards of the gospel. Teach them the importance of the temple and their role in building the kingdom of God.

3. *Youth know when you care.* For youth to truly engage in learning the gospel, they need to know you love them and are interested in them as individuals. Listen



to them. Look for the positive in them and build on that. Express your confidence in them and provide reassurance that they are valued and needed.

4. *Youth have many interests.* Each young person is a unique individual. Get to know their personal interests, needs, and challenges. This may require reaching out to them beyond regularly scheduled meetings, classes, and activities. By getting to know them, you will gain insights and inspiration through the Spirit about their needs that can influence how you teach them. As the youth sense your genuine interest in their lives, their hearts will be more open to your teaching and testimony.

5. *Youth can find answers to their questions.* Learners of all ages enjoy discovering gospel insights, but this is particularly important for adolescents as they develop their values and beliefs. Gospel lessons have lasting impact when they are learned on a personal level—and lived. Instead of

giving youth the answers, you can use teaching methods that invite and inspire them to find their own answers. This will lead to deeper conversion—the ultimate goal of all gospel instruction.

6. *Youth can teach each other.* Youth have an interest in providing input on what is taught and are excited to share what they know. By your example and instruction, you can help them learn to teach in the Savior's way. With your guidance they might begin by teaching a portion of a lesson or leading a short discussion. As they gain experience and confidence, they could have occasional opportunities to teach an entire lesson. When youth learn from each other, they help strengthen one another against pressures from those who don't share their values.

7. *Youth are learning leadership.* Class and quorum presidencies have sacred callings to lead their peers. But even when they've had leadership experience, they'll need guidance from you on how to conduct meetings, help others learn, and minister. Other leadership opportunities may come at home as youth are given meaningful responsibilities.

8. *Youth learn from parents and other adult role models.* An important part of your responsibility as a teacher is to help strengthen the relationship between the youth, their leaders, and their parents. You can help the youth find answers to many of their questions, but some of their questions will be better answered by their parents or leaders. Direct young people to their parents and encourage them to strengthen family bonds. Communicate regularly with parents about what you are studying in class and share the talents, growth, and positive contributions you observe in their sons and daughters. Ask what you can do to help them as they teach their children.

Helping youth become converted requires the combined efforts of parents, leaders, advisers, and teachers, including seminary teachers. Together you will be able to create a much more powerful learning experience for the youth than you could accomplish separately. ■

For more ideas, see “Teach the Youth” in the new manual *Teaching in the Savior's Way* (online at teaching.lds.org).



“Behold Your Little Ones”

LEARNING TO TEACH CHILDREN

“[Jesus] took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them. . . . And he spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones” (3 Nephi 17:21, 23).

If you are a parent or have been called to teach children, you have been given a great gift. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “[You] are the ones God has appointed to encircle today’s children with love and the fire of faith and an understanding of who they are.”¹

Children will bring you joy and prompt you to be a good example. As you come to recognize the faithfulness, love, trust, and hope of children, you will grow closer to the Lord and better understand His commandment to “become as little children” (Matthew 18:3).

Here are eight things to remember about children as you strive to love and teach them the way the Savior does.

1. *Children are believing.* They are receptive to the truth. Teach them correct doctrine simply and clearly, with language and examples they can understand.

2. *Children can recognize the influence of the Spirit.* Teach them that the feelings of peace, love, and joy they have when they talk or sing about Jesus Christ and His gospel come from the Holy Ghost. Help them understand that these feelings are part of a testimony.

3. *Children understand ideas literally.* Complex metaphors may confuse them. When you teach, refer to familiar events and activities: home, family, and the world around them.

4. *Children are eager to learn.* They enjoy learning through varied experiences and multiple senses. They

respond especially well to visual aids and involvement in lessons. Allow them to move about, explore, and try new things.

5. *Children are eager to share and help.* They have things they can teach each other and you. Invite them to share what they are learning. Give them opportunities to read scriptures, hold pictures, answer questions, or write on the board.

6. *Children are loving and want to be loved.* Look for opportunities to reinforce the kind and loving behavior that comes naturally to them. Build their confidence by expressing your love and appreciation and by listening attentively to what they say.

7. *Children follow your example.* You are always teaching, even when you are not aware of it. Children will notice how you live the principles you are teaching. Your righteous example can have a powerful influence on their developing testimonies.

8. *Little children tend to have short attention spans.* Inattentive behavior might mean that they are tired or

hungry, that they do not understand something you have said, that they need to move, or that they are bored. They enjoy learning through repetition, variety, simple stories, songs, and activities. Encourage them to participate in lessons. ■

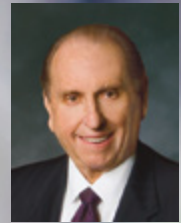
For more ideas, see “Teach the Children” in the new manual Teaching in the Savior’s Way (online at teaching.lds.org).

NOTE

1. M. Russell Ballard, “Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1994, 60.

LESSON RESOURCES

Need a story, visual aid, or video to enrich a Primary or family home evening lesson but don’t know how to find it? Visit lessonhelps.lds.org! You’ll find helpful material organized by Primary lesson, gospel topic, and category. Each week you’ll also find a new teaching tip.



"May the laughter of children gladden our hearts. May the faith of children soothe our souls. May the love of children prompt our deeds."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Precious Children—A Gift from God," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 70.



By Elder Marion D. Hanks (1921–2011)

Served as a member of the Seventy from 1953 to 1992

Temple Worship

THE KEY TO KNOWING GOD

*In the temple we can learn to live as Christ lived on earth
and prepare to live as He and the Father live now.*

I well recall one of the first anxious and earnest conversations with a temple attender after my service as temple president began in the Salt Lake Temple. A very thoughtful young lady had read through the relevant verses concerning the function of the temple as a house of learning and of instruction. She was perceptive enough to recognize that to know God and Christ, “the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent,” is “life eternal” (John 17:3). She knew also that we learn to know our Father and ultimately return to Him through Christ.

My testimony to her was that, for me, everything in the temple points ultimately to Christ and to our Father. The efficacy of the ordinances and covenants is in His atoning love and delegated authority—the authority of “the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God” (D&C 107:3). But she had not yet made a clear connection in her own mind and heart how temple worship can become a critical key to knowing the Lord. . . .

Christ, Scriptures, Temple, Home

The temple is of utmost importance in providing the setting for purifying and therefore sanctifying ourselves, which, as we learn about Christ, can lead us to that

personal knowledge of Him and witness of Him that lead to the most precious of life’s gifts.

Temple learning and worship can be the university of eternal life through Jesus Christ. In the prayer of dedication at Kirtland, this petition was offered to the Lord: “Do thou grant, Holy Father, that all those who shall worship in this house may be taught words of wisdom . . . ;

“And that they may grow up in thee, and receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost” (D&C 109:14–15).

Is this accomplished by ceremonies and ritual? Yes, in part, if we understand the purpose, the symbolism, even as Adam and Eve were brought to understand it in the earliest days of mortality. But basically we learn through the substance of the message, the principles of eternal progression, of eternal life. It is around a few simple principles that we make covenants with the Lord. Recall Paul’s statement to the Romans that we are reconciled to God by Christ’s death, and saved “by his life” (Romans 5:10). To me this says that the principles of His holy life lead us to that fulness of salvation known as exaltation—loving, learning, serving, growing, creative life on a Godly level with loved ones and with the Father and the Son. In the temple we can learn to live as Christ lived on earth and as He and the Father live.



Central Principles of Christ's Life

What are those principles which are central in His life that are taught in the temple and that relate to the covenants we make with the Lord? . . .

He loved in a way that perhaps only He and the Father really yet understand. But we are here to learn that, to learn to love enough to give. On battlefields and in hospital rooms and in the quiet heroic circumstances of unselfish devotion to parent or child, it has been demonstrated for me that there are people who have learned truly to love and sacrifice in His way.

As we choose and follow a course of giving, of caring, of graciousness and kindness, we come to understand that this is not an optional element of the gospel; it is the heart of it. Decency and honor, unselfishness, good manners, and good taste are expected of us. What really matters, after all, is what kind of people we are, what we are willing to give. . . . This we decide daily, hourly, as we learn and accept the direction of the Lord.

After the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Savior, something happened to the surviving disciples, led by Peter, who in a time of stress had failed Him. Pentecost occurred—the coming of the Spirit—and those who had wavered stood strong in testimony and testifying. Chapters 1 to 5 of the book of Acts tell the story. The last verses of chapter 5 have dramatic impact. Gamaliel has intervened with his associates to give the disciples another chance, a little more time. So they are warned again to cease teaching and preaching Christ, are beaten once more, and released. The record says they departed the premises rejoicing that they were found worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. Then, “daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:42).

In like manner something should happen to us as we depart the temple in the spirit of 3 Nephi 17:3: “Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again.”

The Purifying Power of Temple Worship

A purifying spirit can cause us, acquainted now in a special way with the path followed and lighted by the Lord—and loving Him—to be new persons, practicing love and brotherhood, rallying to the will of the Lord, serving, sharing, loving, loyal to wholesome standards, seeking first the kingdom of God.

We need to purify our family lives and make our homes places where we “teach and preach” Jesus Christ daily but follow Him always. Our homes, our families, our individual lives should become centers of learning, centers of unselfishness and service. In the words of Rufus Jones, “Saints are not made for haloes and for inward thrills. They are made to become focus points of light and power. The true saint is a good mother, a good neighbor, a good constructive force in society, a fragrance and a blessing. The true saint is a dynamic Christian who exhibits in some definite spot the type of life which is fully realized in heaven.”¹

Consider what to me is a clear and forceful key to the meaning of temples and temple worship. The Lord



PHOTOGRAPH OF MANILA PHILIPPINES TEMPLE, A WOMAN OF SAMARIA, BY HARRY ANDERSON

revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1836 the prayer that was offered at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. The prayer became section 109 of the Doctrine and Covenants. One who sincerely desires to understand basic temple meaning could well read it over and over, especially its first touching, powerful two dozen verses. Verse 5 is a beautiful statement that merits deep consideration: “For thou knowest that we have done this work through great tribulation; and out of our poverty we have given of our substance to build a house to thy name, *that the Son of Man might have a place to manifest himself to his people*” (D&C 109:5; emphasis added).

How does He manifest Himself to His people in the temple?

Chiefly, I believe, through the beauty and compelling cogency of temple principles, ordinances, and covenants, through temple worship—through the spirit of revelation and other blessings of the Spirit available there for those whose minds and hearts are in tune, and who are patient and anxious to learn and to move their own lives toward Christlike ideals (see 3 Nephi 27:21, 27).

One example may suffice in illustrating the spiritual strength that comes to those who persevere in the service of the Lord in temples. I came into the temple one morning about 4:30 a.m., grateful to have been able to plow through heavy snow from our home to get there. In a secluded room, sitting thoughtfully as he leaned forward on his cane, I chanced upon an older, deeply admired friend. Like I, he was dressed in white, temple workers’ white. I greeted him cheerily and inquired what he was doing there at that hour of the morning.

He said, “You know what I am doing here, President Hanks. I am an ordinance worker here to fulfill my assignment.”

“I do know that,” I said, “but I am wondering how you got here through the snow storm. I just heard on the radio that Parley’s Canyon is closed to all traffic, indeed barricaded.”

He said, “I have a four-wheeler that will climb trees.”

I said, “So do I, or I would not be here, and I live only a few miles away.”



I then asked him how he had managed to get through the barricades that the news announcements had said were in place in the canyon. His answer was not atypical of this rancher and stake president whom I had first seen as a robust, strong man astride his horse when I spent an afternoon with him prior to stake conference meetings. Arthritis and age had literally shrunk him now and would soon take his life. He had much pain in moving about. His answer that morning was, “Now, President Hanks, I have known those highway officers, many of them, since they were born. They know I must get through and that if necessary I might try to go overland! They also know my truck and my experience, and they just move their barricades if they need to.”

He was there, faithful and loyal at that hour of the morning, to begin his sacred work. It is such individuals with such faith and devotion that temples help to develop. ■

From an address delivered in February 1993 at Brigham Young University; the full text is printed in Temples of the Ancient World, ed. Donald W. Parry (1994).

NOTE

1. Rufus Jones *Speaks to Our Time* (1961), 199.



By Elder
Joseph W. Sitati
Of the Seventy

HONORING GOD

BY HONORING OUR COVENANTS

*The greatest blessings of our faith in God are found in
honoring Him by keeping our covenants.*

In 1985 Sister Sitati and I met a man named Roger Howard in Nairobi, Kenya. He and his wife, Eileen, were serving as a senior missionary couple. They invited us to join a small congregation that met in their home. It was the first time we had attended a meeting of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We felt the Spirit at that first meeting, and since then we have attended church every Sunday.

A few months later, Roger baptized us, together with our nine-year-old son. Soon afterward, Roger and Eileen returned home at the end of their mission. We continued to hear from them every few years.

Early in 2010, Sister Sitati and I finally saw Roger again. He was now approaching 90 years old. Worn with old age and poor health, he leaned heavily on his walker. As we stood facing each other for the first time in so many years, we felt a mutual joy beyond description. Tears rolled freely as we tenderly embraced. We felt a deep gratitude for each other and for the marvelous gift of the gospel. We were united in faith as fellow citizens in the kingdom of God.

As I savored that moment, a scripture came to mind: “Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God; . . .

“And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be

one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!” (D&C 18:10, 15).

Some of God’s greatest blessings are promised to those who bring souls to His kingdom. The Savior confided: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (John 15:16).

Roger passed on later that year. I had the distinct feeling that he was a man at peace with God. He had profoundly touched our lives by sharing the gospel. His example of consecrated service to his fellowmen, along with that of the great army of young and senior missionaries serving in the Church, demonstrates one way we honor God.

Our Covenant Relationship with God

Thanks to our membership in the restored Church of Jesus Christ, we each have a binding personal relationship with Heavenly Father through covenants. Each covenant is confirmed by an ordinance, by which we willingly accept and commit to keep the covenant. Jesus Christ, through His Atonement, enables us to fulfill our obligations in each covenant as we exercise faith in Him.

We honor Heavenly Father as we deepen our relationship with Him by making and keeping all the saving



covenants and ordinances. He blesses those who keep their covenants with His Spirit to guide and strengthen them. Following are the most important covenant relationships we can establish with Heavenly Father.

The Baptismal Covenant

Baptism brings us into the first covenant relationship with God. We qualify for the ordinance when we “humble [ourselves] before God, . . . come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that [we] have truly repented of all [our] sins, . . . and truly manifest by [our] works that [we] have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of [our] sins” (D&C 20:37).

As we show by our actions that we do “take upon [us] the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end” (D&C 20:37), “bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; . . . mourn with those that mourn; . . . and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that [we] may be in, even until death” (Mosiah 18:8–9), we keep the covenant.

In turn, God honors us with the gift of the Holy Ghost, by which we receive the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, who provides guidance and direction in all our affairs, leading us to eternal life (see Mosiah 18:9–10).

I felt a sense of great joy and of being filled with the Spirit after my baptism, which I have continued to experience whenever I feel especially close to God.

The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood

Men who keep the covenant of baptism qualify to enter into the oath and covenant of the priesthood. We receive it through the ordinance of laying on of hands. The covenant of the priesthood is a covenant of service for the salvation of God’s children. We honor God as we magnify our callings (see D&C 84:33) and “serve him with all [our] heart, might, mind and strength” (D&C 4:2) and with “faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God” (D&C 4:5).

The blessings of the Lord that come to faithful priesthood holders include sanctification “by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies” (D&C 84:33). They become heirs of the blessings of Moses and of Abraham (see D&C 84:34). Latter-day prophets and apostles are good examples of those who magnify their priesthood. Their lives are a testimony that the Lord honors them.

Temple Ordinances and Covenants

Men who worthily hold the higher priesthood and women who are worthy can receive sacred ordinances and make sacred covenants in the temple. Through temple ordinances and covenants, we learn to understand the purpose of this life and to become prepared for eternal life. We receive the ordinance and enter into the covenant of eternal marriage and of sealing to our families. We commit to consecrate our lives to God and to the work of salvation for all His children. Faithfully keeping these covenants entitles us to receive the spiritual guidance and power to overcome the trials of mortality and to obtain exaltation, the greatest blessing God can give to His children (see D&C 14:7). Exaltation, or eternal life, is to enjoy as families the quality of life our Heavenly Father lives.

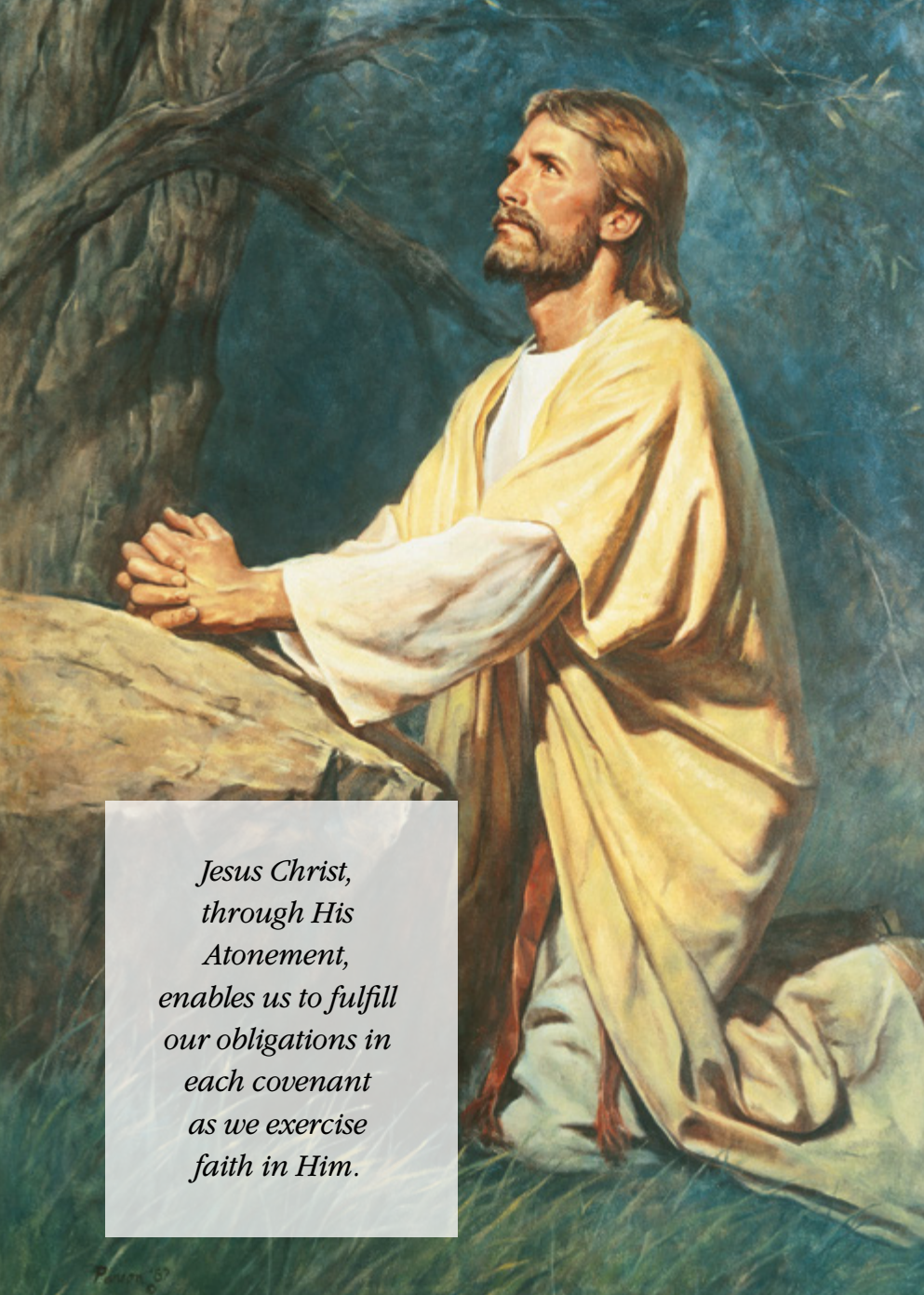
The Sacrament

For members of the Church, taking the sacrament worthily every Sabbath day is essential. By this ordinance, we confirm our continuing willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and to renew our commitment to keep all covenants we have made. We invoke the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ to help us endure to the end in righteousness. As we do so, we qualify for all blessings of all the covenants we have made.

Righteous Desires

Breaking a covenant is offensive to God and renders the promised blessings of no effect (see D&C 82:10).

In 1 Samuel 2:12–17, 22–34, we learn of the evil done by the sons of Eli the priest. They took advantage of their



*Jesus Christ,
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father's position to break the covenant of the priesthood. They sought to fulfill their lustful desires as they indulged in immoral conduct with female worshippers and as they corruptly took for themselves the meat of the sacrifices of the people of Israel. The Lord pronounced severe judgments against Eli's sons and against Eli himself for failing to restrain them.

Such carnal desires can be overcome by a determination to keep our covenants with God, as demonstrated by Joseph of Egypt when confronted by a lustful nonbeliever (see Genesis 39:9, 12). God honored Joseph and helped him overcome all designs of evil against him. He rose to

become the second most powerful man in Egypt and an instrument in the hands of God for the preservation of the family of Israel (see Genesis 45:7–8).

If we are overcome by temptation, the desire to restore our relationship with Heavenly Father will lead us to sincere repentance. The Atonement of the Savior Jesus Christ then helps us to become worthy once again.

Following the Prophets

When Christ established His Church, He chose apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers “for the edifying of the body of Christ:

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12–13).

Our living prophets and apostles teach that “happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the

Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129).

Our homes and our families provide the foundation for building strong relationships with God based on covenants. Following the inspired teachings of our living prophets will help us to have strong families, give us the power to keep our covenants, and secure the greatest blessings of our faith. ■

THE Promise OF THE Sacrament

*How can we more fully enjoy the blessing of always
having the Lord's Spirit with us?*

As we come to the ordinance of the sacrament prayerfully prepared, remembering the Savior and being willing to take upon us His name and keep His commandments, we have the promise that we will “always have his Spirit to be with [us]” (D&C 20:77; see also 3 Nephi 18:11).

Having His Spirit with us allows us to be comforted, healed, and taught—examples of blessings bestowed “according to the multitude of [the Lord’s] tender mercies” (1 Nephi 8:8; see also Psalm 51:1; 69:16; 1 Nephi 1:20; Ether 6:12).

How can we more fully enjoy this magnificent blessing of the sacrament—always having His Spirit with us? The following experiences of Church members suggest that as we devotedly remember the Savior, partake of the sacrament with a broken heart and contrite spirit, and truly hunger for the blessings of the sacrament, we can experience an abundance of the Lord’s Spirit in our lives.



I committed that on this day while the sacrament was being blessed and passed, I would more thoughtfully and reverently remember the sacrifice of my Savior.

Remembering His Sacrifice

One Sunday as Tony Ort of Utah, USA, sang the sacrament hymn “We’ll Sing All Hail to Jesus’ Name” (*Hymns*, no. 182), these words particularly touched his heart:

*The bread and water represent
His sacrifice for sin;
Ye Saints, partake and testify
Ye do remember him.*

“As I sang that verse on that Sabbath morning,” he recalls, “I committed that on this day while the sacrament was being blessed and passed, I would more thoughtfully and reverently remember the sacrifice of my Savior.”

This experience sparked further reflection. “I asked myself, ‘How should I remember?’” Recognizing that “Jesus lived His life with absolute unselfishness, putting my needs and the needs of all humankind as His first priority,” Brother Ort felt led to ask, “How can I deny Him my love and devotion, as the Israelites of His day did, and as so many continue to do, by simply failing to remember Him?”

We must do Him the simple honor of remembering His life and ministry. We can do it as we say our daily prayers.”

Brother Ort points to the sacrament prayers as a sure guide for how to remember and honor the Savior, concluding, “We are asked only to identify ourselves with Him, which we do as Christians; to keep Him in our thoughts; and to be obedient and keep His commandments. Perhaps this can be best accomplished by following the admonition to love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind and to love our neighbors as ourselves (see Matthew 22:37–39).”

As Brother Ort’s experience demonstrates, the sacrament inspires gratitude for the Savior and a desire to remember Him. When we focus on the Savior in this way, the Spirit fills our hearts with love and turns our thoughts and actions outward to others.

Focusing our minds during the sacrament is not always easy, however. Parents with young children, for example, may give up on the possibility of having a spiritual



CONSCIENTIOUS PREPARATION

"The ordinance of the sacrament is a holy and repeated invitation to repent sincerely and to be renewed spiritually. . . . As we prepare conscientiously and participate in this holy ordinance with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then the promise is that we may *always* have the Spirit of the Lord to be with us. And by the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost as our constant companion, we can *always* retain a remission of our sins."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Always Retain a Remission of Your Sins," *Ensign*, May 2016, 61–62.

experience during the sacrament, hoping to simply get through without disrupting the reverence of the meeting. Sister Carolina Almánzar de Flete, from the Dominican Republic, finds joy in reflecting on the Savior's example of letting the little children come to Him (see Mark 10:14) as she watches her ten-year-old son renew his covenants and her one-year-old begin to learn to sit still.

"I come with a desire to have mindful moments where I remember the Savior and try to provide that experience for my children," she says. "I take the bread in hopes of leading by example as my Savior did and drink the water remembering the promises made to my children as children of the covenant. And I remember His promises to me when doctors said I would have no children."

Bringing a Broken Heart and a Contrite Spirit

Margarida Demarchi of Manitoba, Canada, likens her need for spiritual light to the Jaredites' need for physical light as they prepared to cross the "great deep" to the promised land (see Ether 2:25; 3:1–6). Sister Demarchi finds her light in sacrament meeting.

"The sacrament prayers have the promise that we will have the Spirit to be with us, and the Spirit provides the light we need to make our life's journey. But was I getting the light I needed from the sacrament? And if not, how could I get it? What could be the stones that I, like the brother of Jared, should bring with me to sacrament meeting? The Lord said that He wants from us a broken heart and a contrite spirit. So it would not be enough to come to the sacrament; I would need to

bring my own stones—my broken heart and contrite spirit."

What does it mean to bring the Lord a broken heart and a contrite spirit? Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained that a broken heart is a repentant heart and that a contrite spirit is an obedient spirit.¹

Sister Demarchi states, "I learned that when I approach the sacrament seeking for the Lord as the brother of Jared did, and bring my stones of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, I leave the sacrament meeting with light."

Hungering for the Blessings of the Sacrament

When he was a soldier, Nathan Loomis of South Carolina, USA, was stationed in a remote area where there were no other Latter-day Saints. He was given special permission to administer the sacrament for himself. Because the soldiers lived in tents and their location changed from week to week, it was a challenge to find someplace private enough to prepare and partake of the sacrament.

"What I had taken quite lightly for so many years became something to be treasured," Brother Loomis says. As his appreciation and longing for the sacrament grew, so did his testimony and the blessings of the Spirit in his life.

"I love the cleansing, sanctifying feel of the sacrament. I know that when I take it seriously and approach it with an attitude of repentance and a desire for change, the Lord listens to me. He has protected me spiritually and physically."



What I had taken quite lightly for so many years became something to be treasured.

Benjamin Platt of Wyoming, USA, was also given permission to hold his own sacrament meeting when he was a soldier assigned to an isolated area. Missing the familiar feeling of brotherhood and belonging he had known among his fellow Latter-day Saints, Brother Platt began to feel a spiritual hunger.

“My sacrament meeting was a tremendous blessing, and I felt the comfort of the Spirit. But I was still lonely. One Sunday when I knelt to bless the bread, I felt the Spirit whisper, ‘You are not alone.’ It became suddenly clear to me that the ordinance I was participating in was tying me to every member attending church that day and to every sacrament prayer offered. As my family sat in sacrament meeting thousands of miles away, they were participating in the same ordinance that I was. We were asking together for the blessings of the sacrament and making covenants in return.”

Taught by and filled with the Spirit, Brother Platt was “also reminded of the angels that are constantly surrounding and protecting us. The Savior taught, ‘My Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up’ (D&C 84:88).”

An Abundance of His Spirit

Ramona Demery, from Utah, expresses through her poem “My Savior” the abundance of the Spirit that the Lord offers us:

*He is bread,
Filling the void in my innermost being,
Easing the emptiness of that other hunger.
He is water,
Flowing softly into my soul,
Quenching the thirst that lies deep within.
He is love,
Giving me His love to share with others,
Offering me the incomparable gift of His
Spirit.
He is light,
Filling my mind with understanding,
Lighting my path into eternity.*

In the sacredness of our own sacramental hours, “may we more fully realize the special blessing of . . . the sacrament”² so that we too might enjoy and rejoice in always having the Lord’s Spirit to be with us. ■

NOTES

1. See D. Todd Christofferson, “When Thou Art Converted,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 12.
2. L. Tom Perry, “As Now We Take the Sacrament,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 42.



HEALING SPIRITUAL WOUNDS

“I am a witness that there is a spirit attending the administration of the sacrament that warms the soul from head to foot; you feel the wounds of the spirit being healed, and the load is lifted.”

Elder Melvin J. Ballard (1873–1939) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Sacrament and Spiritual Growth,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2015, 50.

My Journey

AS A PIONEER FROM INDIA



I look back at my journey from being a “jungle boy” in rural India to being where I am today and know that my life and faith are truly miracles.



**By Mangal Dan Dipty,
as told to John Santosh
Murala**

I was born in a small jungle village surrounded by the Eastern Ghats mountain range in India. When I was 18 months old, we moved to the village Dangrapalli on the banks of the River Kolab. I was transported in a basket while my parents walked. The village consisted of 20–25 families, who lived in small huts with no electricity. We had no school, hospital, or bus station. We dug the riverbed for drinking water. I spent my childhood playing in the jungle and fields, walking on stilts in the swamps, and swimming in the river.

My forefathers were Hindu temple priests under the Maharaja (King) of Bastar of Jagdalpur. But when the political instability became dangerous, my grandfather and his family escaped to Kotpad. They were given refuge at a German Lutheran mission, where he worked as a caretaker and practiced Ayurveda (herbal medicine). It was here that my grandfather chose to convert to Christianity.

My father continued in the Christian faith by choosing to become an evangelist and a guru (teacher). When I was born, I was named Mangal Dan Dipty (meaning “good,” “gift,” and “light”), inheriting a tradition of Christian faith.

As a child I attended the German Lutheran church regularly. We would go to the mountains to pray together often. One rainy day, everyone in the prayer group was drenched, and one of the preachers offered a fervent prayer pleading with the Lord to stop the rain. To our amazement the rain stopped. That was the beginning of my faith in God and prayer.

Is Mormonism Christian?

After eighth grade, I discontinued school to attend a three-year theological seminary at Kotpad and was ordained an evangelist, as my father had been. After a few

years of conducting meetings in and around Kotpad, I moved to northern India, where I began to sell books from the Evangelical Christian literature society. I came across a book called *Is Mormonism Christian?* Something about the book intrigued me, and I decided to read it.

The book had a lot of criticism toward the Mormons and their beliefs. Even so, many parts of the book intrigued me, especially their concept of the Godhead, the components of their worship, and the history of polygamy. However, what interested me the most was that their church was named after Jesus Christ. I was curious to know more.

One day while praying, I felt inspired to investigate the Mormon Church. I learned that Salt Lake City, Utah, was the Church's headquarters. I decided to write a letter and addressed it to "Men in charge of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA."

Learning from an Apostle

In 1959, in response to my letter, Brother Lamar Williams from the Church Missionary Department sent me Joseph Smith's testimony, the Articles of Faith, and the Book of Mormon. I studied them all and was convinced of their truthfulness. However, there were no missionaries or members to teach me in India.

Then in January 1961, Elder Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited Delhi. I spent three days traveling with him to the Taj Mahal at Agra and to Dharamsala. I was like a sponge soaking up all the gospel lessons he taught. On the final day of his visit, I was ready for baptism. On January 7, 1961, I was baptized by Elder Kimball in the Yamuna River; Sister Kimball was the official witness, though there were many curious onlookers. I was confirmed that evening.

Those three days when the Lord's Apostle taught me without any interruptions have been some of the best days of my life. Parting was sad because he had become my special Mormon friend.

Yearning for the Saints

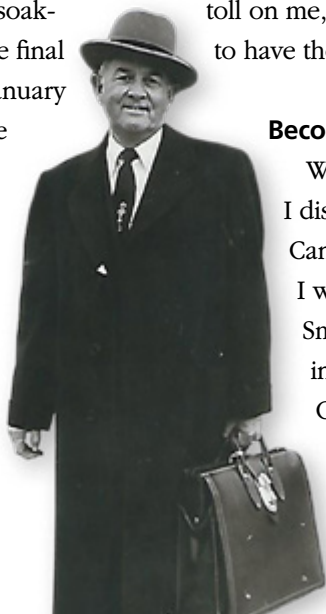
After Elder Kimball left, I shared my conversion experience with my friends, and they mocked me. But I knew the gospel was true and could not deny it, so I decided to find another vocation. I started a garment business as my father had. Gradually, though, I realized that I could not progress unless I gained more education. I was in my mid-20s, and the idea of going back to school was daunting, but I spent the next nine years acquiring education. I ran my business in the morning and studied in the evening. I spent all my earnings on education. I was determined and prayed for divine help. I pursued a bachelor's degree in psychology, sociology, and arts from Agra University. Finally, I attended the Meerut University to study for a law degree.

During the early part of those nine years, there was one Latter-day Saint family in Delhi, the Shortlefts, who worked in the U.S. Embassy. I traveled to Delhi for sacrament meeting in their home. In 1962, Elder Richard L. Evans (1906–71) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited us, and in 1964, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles came. I remember placing a garland on Elder Hinckley and handing over my pot of saved tithing, which I had been accumulating for many years.

Unfortunately, these moments of fellowship—though helpful—were infrequent, and while in India I was devoid of the constant fellowship of other Saints. This troubled my heart. As the years wore on, lonesomeness was taking a toll on me, and I saw no future for me in India. I longed to have the priesthood and live among the Saints.

Becoming a Pioneer

When I felt it was time to be closer to the Saints, I discontinued my law course and immigrated to Canada. When I landed in Edmonton, Alberta, I went to the nearest ward. I met Bishop Harry Smith and immediately felt a sense of belonging and fellowship in that ward. I visited the Cardston Alberta Temple, even though I could not receive my endowment yet.





Above: Brother Dipty as a student in India. Below: Brother Dipty (left) with Paul Trithuvadass, another pioneer Church member from India, on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. Left: President Spencer W. Kimball played an important part in Brother Dipty's pioneer journey.



I wanted to visit Salt Lake City and surprise my good friends Elder Kimball and Brother Lamar Williams. Finally, in the spring of 1969, eight years after my baptism, I visited Salt Lake City and met with Elder Kimball. He was delighted and spent the rest of the day with me.

While in Salt Lake City, I went to a salon for a haircut. I shared my testimony with the barber, who was a convert himself. One gentleman, waiting for his turn, overheard me and told me about his travels to India. He paid for my haircut, invited me to dinner, and drove me to Brigham Young University. I was impressed by the campus. I mentioned that I wanted to continue my studies here but could not afford it. The man offered to pay \$1,000 for my tuition. I was surprised and immensely grateful.

I joined the social work program at BYU. In 1972, after graduating from BYU, I moved to Salt Lake City to pursue a master's degree from the University of Utah. Later I moved to California, USA, where I earned a PhD in clinical psychology, taught courses on how to stop domestic violence, and authored a book. I am now retired and live with my wife, Wendy, in Nevada, USA.

There was a time when I went through much personal strife, challenges, and tribulations. My focus on the gospel and the blessings of the temple helped me overcome many of life's challenges.

His Plans Are a Marvel

I often look back at my journey from being a “jungle boy” in rural India to being where I am today and know that my life and faith are truly miracles. The Lord's embroidery of my life is more beautiful than I ever expected. How wonderful it was to have the Lord's anointed prophet Spencer W. Kimball school me and walk with me at key times in my life's journey.

I often think back to my time with President Kimball. He would invite me to his family camping trips, picnics, and Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. Even then I knew that he truly was an Apostle and prophet of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I met President Kimball one last time while he was very ill. But he still smiled at me and hugged me. He was my first LDS contact, and I knew he would never let go of me.

I am thankful to God for our prophets and the restored gospel. Our Church is the divine model the world needs today. Because of the Church I was able to gain an education and grow as a person. I am grateful for that day when I knew prayer was real and that I was willing to listen to the still, small voice and investigate the Church. I am grateful that I allowed the Lord to shape my life. I know that if we seek His kingdom, everything else will be added to us (see Matthew 6:33). ■

The author is from Telangana, India.

A Heritage of Faith

Tenderly $\text{♩} = 76-86$

Words and music by Rachel Mecham Goates

1. On a
2. As —

9
morn - ing in the spring, A boy of ten - der years Went in - to the woods to pray, Be -
9 heav - en filled the earth With pre - cious truth re - stored, Those with hearts pre - pared to hear Made

15
liev - ing God would hear. He knelt in hum - ble prayer, And this sim - ple act of faith Brought
15 cov - nants with the Lord. They blazed a trail of faith, And they left their na - tive lands. They

21
God the Fa - ther and the Son, Who taught him face to face. _____
21 sac - ri - ficed through trials and tears, Their fu - ture in God's hands. _____

27
Now in a mod - ern day, Though I am in my youth, The Ho - ly Ghost has
27 I may not have to leave, For - sak - ing hearth and home, But like the faith - ful

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34
test - i - fied - That Jo - seph spoke the truth. So when the whirl - winds blow, I am
pi - o - neers, I am called to car - ry on. When fie - ry darts a - rise To —

39
an - chored in that peace, And those who fol - low af - ter me — Will
pull me from my course, I'll keep my foot - steps strong and sure — And

44
Chorus
know what I be - lieved. — A her - i - tage of faith, Left by those who
live to serve the Lord. —

50
came be - fore, A re - fuge from the storm, A foun - da - tion firm and true. With faith in Je - sus

56
Christ, I will build up - on that le - ga - cy. — Stead - fast and be - liev - ing in my

62

1.

day, I will leave a her - i - tage of faith.

68

2.

faith. Stead - fast and be - liev - ing in my day,

74

I will leave a her - i - tage of faith.

81

BECOMING BRIGHAM

By Don L. Searle

*Cut and fasten, sand and smooth,
Brigham was a worker in wood.
Of grain and fit and strength he knew;
What work he did, it stood.*

*A careful man, he did not go
With any wind that blew,
But weighed and thought and pondered,
And acted when he knew.*

*So it was with faith,
For he weighed the gospel well,
And when at length he knew,
He anchored heart and will.*

*No eager taker of the mantle
To prophet-teacher given,
He bore it nobly when it fell,
And bent his will to heaven's.*

*So it is with other prophets,
Each, like Brigham in his way,
Never seeking for the role,
Ever faithful to obey.*

*For each was ready at the call—
None's life was bent by careless choice—
Each prepared by heaven's tutelage
To hear and heed the Master's voice.*



THANK YOU FOR INTRODUCING ME TO THE GOSPEL

In the early 1980s, my family lived in West Germany, and we were members of the Kaiserslautern Germany Servicemen Stake. At the time, our local leaders were emphasizing missionary work. We were told that within our circle of friends, the Lord had placed some of His choice spirit children who were seeking the gospel of Jesus Christ.

My wife, Jenny, and I believed that to be true. Our leaders encouraged each of us to identify nonmember friends we thought would be interested in hearing the gospel. We were to make a list of about 10 people and then fast and pray about our list of friends and decide whom we were to approach first. We decided on contacting two men who were co-workers in my office. I spoke first to a young single man named Chris, but he showed little interest at the time. Next, we decided I would approach Bruce

Hamby, a good and kind man with a young family.

However, several days went by and I found myself nervous about speaking to him about the gospel. Finally, one day Jenny called me at the office and asked, "Have you spoken to Bruce yet?" I said, "No, but I will soon." She then asked if Bruce was in the office that day, and I said he was. At that point she said, "Scott, put down the phone. I will wait while you talk to him!"

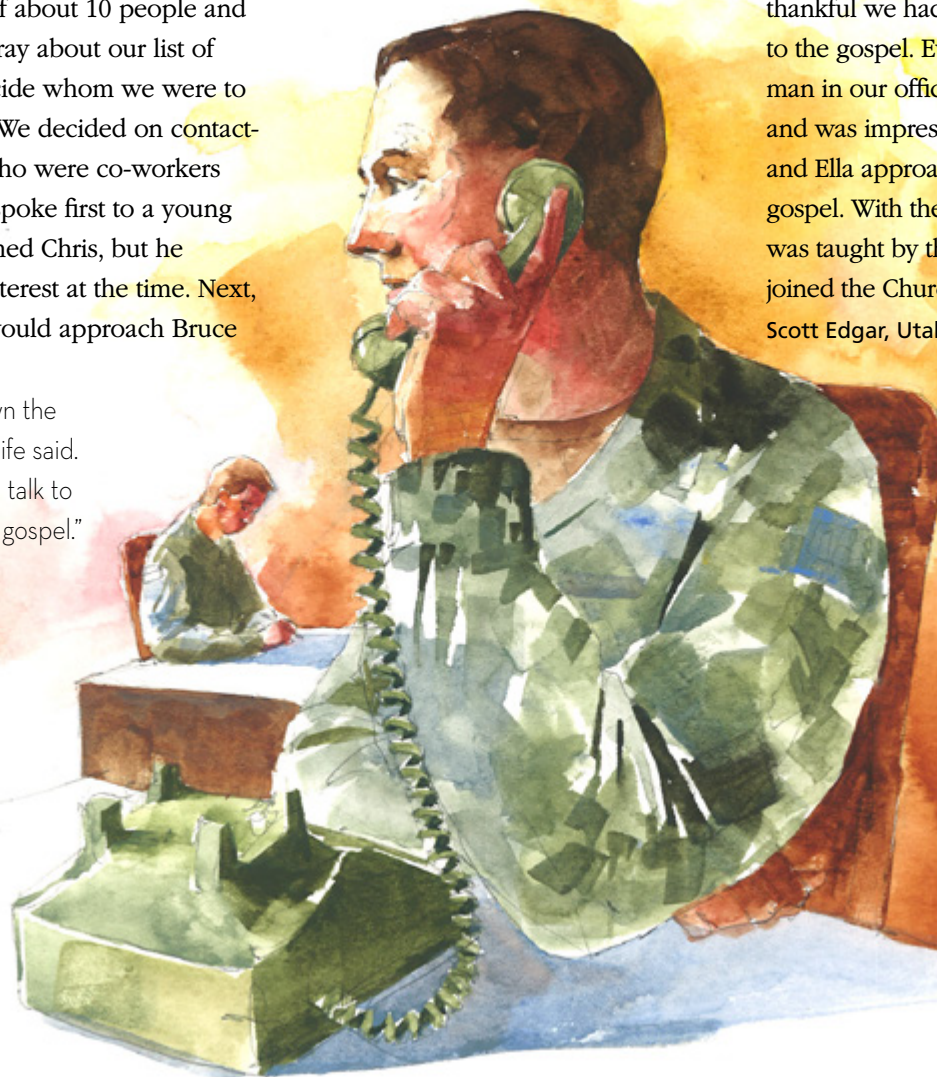
I put down the phone and nervously went over to Bruce and asked,

"Bruce, did you know that I'm a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?" He said yes; and I said, "Would you be interested in learning more about the Church?" He answered, "Yes, I would."

Over the next few weeks, Bruce, his wife, Ella, and their daughter, Tanya, came to our home for dinner and met with the missionaries. They were taught the lessons, attended church meetings with us, accepted the gospel, and were baptized. It was a gloriously wonderful and happy day. Bruce was thankful we had introduced his family to the gospel. Even Chris, the young man in our office, attended the baptism and was impressed. Later on, Bruce and Ella approached Chris about the gospel. With their fellowshipping, Chris was taught by the missionaries and joined the Church too. ■

Scott Edgar, Utah, USA

"Scott, put down the phone," my wife said. "I'll wait while you talk to Bruce about the gospel."



To my surprise I met a less-active sister in the hall who needed comfort and help.



I FELT INADEQUATE

When I was called as Relief Society president, I was a busy young mother. I had grown up in the Church and lived my life according to its teachings, but I knew I wasn't perfect and felt concerned about my ability to help the struggling sisters in my ward.

One Sunday in church I felt particularly downhearted. All day I had been stopped by sisters who needed me. Some needed help with welfare, and some just needed me to listen to them. Then the Spirit prompted me not to go into sacrament meeting when it started, and to my surprise I met a less-active sister in the hall who needed comfort and help and could not wait until the end of the meeting.

When church ended, I was exhausted! I cried in the car all the way home. In my head the following words rang: "Talk to the bishop!" I felt that the bishop would have something wise to tell me about how I could feel less burdened with my calling, but I

didn't want to bother him at the end of a long day at church. I had decided to put off calling him when the phone rang. It was my bishop. He had felt prompted to call me.

I told the bishop how draining it had been for me when so many things needed to be solved at once and how sad I felt that I could not help more sisters. He listened patiently. We also went through some of the welfare questions that had come up during the day, and I felt better.

When the conversation ended, I said, "I thought you would have something wise to tell me about how not to feel so overburdened." He answered that he wished he had something like that to say, but unfortunately he didn't.

Even though my question wasn't answered, I felt happy when I hung up the phone. I felt that the Lord had answered my need for guidance and support.

During the following weeks the

feelings of insecurity returned, and I prayed to understand what I needed to do to become a better Relief Society president. One day, as I listened to general conference, some words caught my attention, and the Spirit spoke strongly to my heart. I understood that the reason I had felt so inadequate was because I *was* inadequate on my own.

Through his example, my bishop had shown me how important it is to listen to the Holy Ghost. It is the Spirit that is the key to our callings in the Church, not our own talents or skills. For the first time in a long time, I felt peace and assurance.

I still lack experience and am just as busy with my family as before, but I no longer believe that I must carry out my calling perfectly. Heavenly Father can provide me with the things I need to carry out His will and is able to magnify our efforts as long as we keep His commandments. ■

Name withheld, Stockholm, Sweden

FINDING GRANDMA

One regret I have is that I never sat down with my paternal grandmother to talk about her life and record her memories for posterity. After her death my father and uncles would tell me how unimpressed she was with herself and that she even asked on occasion, “Why would anyone want to know about me?”

When financial difficulties forced my family to move into Grandma’s old house, a flood of happy memories came rushing back, along with the regret. One night a few days after moving in, I looked through several of my grandmother’s old photo albums and a box of keepsakes, which included old letters my uncle had written, old temple recommends, and even my grandfather’s funeral program. After looking at this memorabilia, I wondered if there was more.

I felt impressed to look in the attic and was immediately led to a sack that contained an old blue binder that looked destined for the trash can. In that binder I discovered the beginning of a life story my grandmother had written 30 years before. I found out later, to my astonishment, that no one in the family even knew it existed. My father and uncles were right—Grandma was so unimpressed with herself that she didn’t even tell anyone she had started writing a life story!

That night I read every single word on those eight pages, and as I did,

I learned a lot about my grandma—what life was like for her in high school, how she met my grandfather, and how hard it was for her to close the movie theater she and my grandfather had operated together.

I felt her presence as I read those pages, as if she were telling me not to worry any longer about not completing the oral history I had intended to do. Reading about my grandmother’s life in her own hand was absolutely priceless and lessened the regret I had been feeling for so long. It was a reassurance of the Lord’s tender

mercies and a testament that family history isn’t just finding out about ancestors we did not know in this life. It’s also about discovering more about those we love dearly and with whom we spent precious time here on earth.

When I sit down with other family members to write their histories and they ask me why anyone would want to know about them, I’ll assure them that their stories are worth telling and that their posterity will thank them, just as I thank my grandma for leaving her invaluable account. ■

Reuben Wadsworth, Utah, USA



ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN GARRIS

A TEMPLE HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD

In my late teens I joined the Church against the wishes of my family. When I was in my 20s, I began working on my family history after my father passed away. Soon after, I became a busy wife and mother raising young children, and the family history work stopped.

Because I didn't have any family in the Church, I had a strong desire to research my family history. I loved doing it and always longed to have more time to work on it.

When I was 33, my life took an unexpected turn when my health


began to decline. Where I once was able to hike with my family, taking a walk around the block became difficult. Cleaning house in two hours on a Saturday became impossible, and I was just happy if I could get through vacuuming. Where I once had a large circle of friends, now my circle of friends declined because I could no longer be there for them as I had in the past.

It was at this time that I began to take up my family history again. My daughter began doing research for her dad's side and in one evening

completed work that had taken me years to do. I completed several generations on my line and submitted the names to the temple for the work to be completed. I had always wanted to go through the temple for my family members myself, but my health and the distance from the temple made it impossible.

After submitting the names, I began to cry, feeling like I had let my family members down since I wouldn't be there with them on the special day the ordinances were done for them. A week later as I logged on to [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) to check the progress of their temple work, I saw something amazing. Not only was the work being completed, but members in the Accra Ghana Temple were doing the work! I was so surprised to see members halfway around the world completing temple work for my little family. I burst into tears again thinking of the sacrifices of the people in Ghana as they made their way to the temple for my family. I am so grateful for those members of the Accra Ghana Temple district who did what I could not: attend the temple and grant my family the blessing of temple ordinances. ■

Robin Estabrooks, Virginia, USA



I felt impressed to look in the attic and was immediately led to a sack that looked destined for the trash can.



By President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015)

President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

SPIRITUAL CROCODILES

"Nonsense," I said. "There are no crocodiles out there."

I always wanted to go to Africa and see the animals, and finally that opportunity came. . . .

We stopped at a water hole to watch the animals come to drink. It was very dry that season and there was not much water, really just muddy spots. When the elephants stepped into the soft mud the water would seep into the depression and the animals would drink from the elephant tracks.

The antelope, particularly, were very nervous. They would approach the mud hole, only to turn and run away in great fright. I could see there were no lions about and asked the guide why they didn't drink. His answer, and this is the lesson, was "Crocodiles."

I knew he must be joking and asked him seriously, "What is the problem?" The answer again: "Crocodiles."

"Nonsense," I said. "There are no crocodiles out there." . . .

He could tell I did not believe him and determined, I suppose, to teach me a lesson. We drove to another location where the car was on an embankment above the muddy hole



where we could look down. "There," he said. "See for yourself."

I couldn't see anything except the mud, a little water, and the nervous animals in the distance. Then all at once I saw it!—a large crocodile, settled in the mud, waiting for some unsuspecting animal to get thirsty enough to come for a drink. . . .

The guide was kinder to me than I deserved. My "know-it-all" challenge to his first statement, "crocodiles," might have brought an invitation, "Well, go out and see for yourself!"

I could see for myself that there were no crocodiles. I was so sure of myself I think I might have walked out just to see what was there. Such an arrogant approach could have been fatal! But he was patient enough to teach me.

My young friends, I hope you'll be wiser in talking to your guides than I

was on that occasion. That smart-aleck idea that I knew everything really wasn't worthy of me, nor is it worthy of you. I'm not very proud of it, and I think I'd be ashamed to tell you about it except that telling you may help you.

Those ahead of you in life have probed about the water holes a bit and raise a voice of warning about crocodiles. Not just the big, gray lizards that can bite you to pieces, but *spiritual crocodiles*, infinitely more dangerous, and more deceptive and less visible, even, than those well-camouflaged reptiles of Africa.

These spiritual crocodiles can kill or mutilate your souls. They can destroy your peace of mind and the peace of mind of those who love you. Those are the ones to be warned against, and there is hardly a watering place in all of mortality now that is not infested with them. . . .

Fortunately there are guides enough in life to prevent these things from happening if we are willing to take counsel now and again. ■

From "Spiritual Crocodiles," Ensign, May 1976, 30–31.

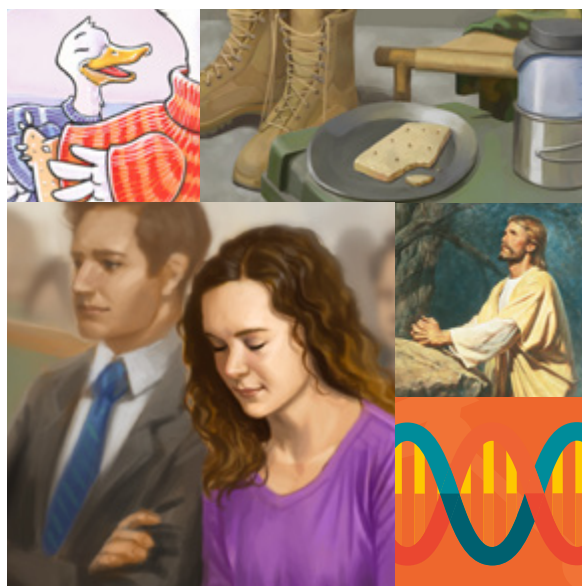
INSIGHTS



How can we thrive in a hostile world?

“As individuals, disciples of Christ, living in a hostile world that is literally in commotion, we can thrive and bloom if we are rooted in our love of the Savior and humbly follow His teachings.”

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Lord Is My Light,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 63.



In Church Magazines

Ensign: What is the promise of the sacrament? That we will “always have his Spirit to be with [us]” (D&C 20:77) to comfort, heal, and teach us. See page 62.

New Era: This month, youth can learn what it means to remember the Savior and to keep their covenants (pages 10–21). Also, Latter-day Saint scientists talk about the role of science in the search for truth (page 26).

Friend: Read with your children this fun story about a pioneer family: “The Ducks’ New Clothes” (page 8). Then find and collect stories from your own family—past and present. Share them at family home evening or as bedtime stories.

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