

Ensign

A photograph of three young people, two men and one woman, leaning on a glass railing. They are dressed in business attire (suits and a blazer). The woman in the foreground is smiling broadly and wearing red-rimmed glasses. The two men behind her are also smiling and wearing glasses. In the background, a city skyline is visible under a clear blue sky.

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

Joseph, by Scott Allred

Artist Scott Allred based his oil painting of the Prophet Joseph Smith on profile portraits done in Nauvoo, Illinois, in about 1843 by artist Sutcliffe Maudsley.



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ON THE COVER
Photograph by Adam C. Olson



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DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

In today's electronic and mobile world, many of us find ourselves frequently using MP3 players, cell phones, handheld devices, and other equipment to help us organize our lives and keep in contact with others. While these devices are certainly useful, we can also benefit from having time away from them. How have you benefited from "unplugging" yourself from these devices during Church worship or for quiet meditation? How are your teaching and learning experience affected when you let go of constant connectivity? Please limit submissions to 800 words and send them by July 11. You can find this and other calls for articles online at ensign.lds.org.

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

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Ensign

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USING THIS ISSUE

Feel peace through the gospel. Several articles in this issue deal with feeling peace, even amid hectic schedules, separation from family, illness, or living in times of trouble (see pp. 10, 22, 24, 34, 46, 51, and 54). How have you felt the peace of the gospel in situations like these?

Teach leadership skills. Are you a parent or leader of youth? President Dieter F. Uchtdorf and Elder M. Russell Ballard explain that it's important not only to lead youth but also to teach *them* to lead. See page 16 for ideas you can implement in your home and ward or branch.

Connect with your ward. After reading "Reaching Out to Belong" (p. 64), you might consider accessing your ward and stake Web site. These locally administered sites include calendars, directories, and other helpful information. Visit www.lds.org to learn more. You'll find the link under the heading "About the Church."



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COMING IN JULY

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- *The counselors in the new First Presidency.*
- *Using the Internet to share the gospel.*
- *Healing for spouses in cases of addiction.*



Safety in Counsel

BY PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING

First Counselor in the First Presidency

The Savior has always been the protector of those who would accept His protection. He has said more than once, “How oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not” (3 Nephi 10:5; see also, for example, Matthew 23:37; D&C 29:2).

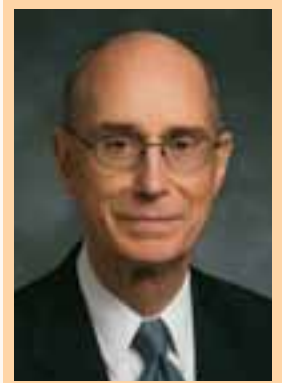
The Lord expressed the same lament in our own dispensation after describing the many ways in which He calls us to safety: “How oft have I called upon you by the mouth of my servants, and by the ministering of angels, and by mine own voice, and by the voice of thunders, and by the voice of lightnings, and by the voice of tempests, and by the voice of earthquakes, and great hailstorms, and by the voice of famines and pestilences of every kind, and by the great sound of a trump, and by the voice of judgment, and by the voice of mercy all the day long, and by the voice of glory and honor and the riches of eternal life, and would have saved you with an everlasting salvation, but ye would not!” (D&C 43:25).

There seems to be no end to the Savior’s desire to lead us to safety, and there is constancy in the way He shows us the path. He calls by more than one means so that it will

reach those willing to accept it. Those means always include sending the message by the mouths of His prophets whenever people have qualified to have the prophets of God among them. Those authorized servants are always charged with warning the people, telling them the way to safety.

A Prophet’s Warning

When tensions ran high in northern Missouri in the fall of 1838, the Prophet Joseph Smith called for all the Latter-day Saints to gather to Far West for protection. Many were on isolated farms or in scattered settlements. He specifically counseled Jacob Haun, founder of a small settlement called Haun’s Mill. A record of that time includes this: “Brother Joseph had sent word by Haun, who owned the mill, to inform the brethren who were living there to leave and come to Far West, but Mr. Haun did not deliver the message.”¹ Later, the Prophet Joseph recorded in his history: “Up to this day God had given me wisdom to save the people who took counsel. None had ever been killed who abode by my counsel.”² Then the Prophet recorded the sad truth that innocent lives could have been saved at Haun’s Mill had his counsel been received and followed.



There seems to be no end to the Savior’s desire to lead us to safety, and there is constancy in the way He shows us the path. He calls by more than one means so that it will reach those willing to accept it.

In our own time we have been warned with counsel on where to find safety from sin and from sorrow. One of the keys to recognizing those warnings is that they are repeated. For instance, more than once in general conferences, you have heard our prophet say that he would quote a preceding prophet and would therefore be a second witness and sometimes even a third. Each of us old enough to listen heard President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) give counsel on the importance of a mother in the home and then heard President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) quote him, and we have heard President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) quote them both.³

The Apostle Paul wrote, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” (2 Corinthians 13:1). One of the ways we may know that the warning is from the Lord is that the law of witnesses, authorized witnesses, has been invoked. When the words of prophets seem repetitive, that should rivet our attention and fill our hearts with gratitude to live in such a blessed time.

Looking for the path to safety in the counsel of prophets makes sense to those with strong faith. When a prophet speaks, those with little faith may think that they hear only a wise man giving good advice. Then if his counsel seems comfortable and reasonable, squaring with what they want to do, they take it. If it does not, they either consider it faulty advice or they see their circumstances as justifying their being an exception to the counsel. Those without faith may think that they hear only men seeking to exert influence for some selfish motive. They may mock and deride, as did a man named Korihor, with these words recorded in the Book of Mormon: “And thus ye lead away this people after the foolish traditions of your fathers, and according to your own desires; and ye keep them down, even as it were in bondage, that ye may glut yourselves with the labors of their hands, that they durst not look up with boldness, and that they durst not enjoy their rights and privileges” (Alma 30:27).

Korihor was arguing, as men and women have falsely argued from the beginning of time, that to take counsel from the servants of God is to surrender God-given rights

of independence. But the argument is false because it misrepresents reality. When we reject the counsel that comes from God, we do not choose to be independent of outside influence. We choose another influence. We reject the protection of a perfectly loving, all-powerful, all-knowing Father in Heaven, whose whole purpose, as that of His Beloved Son, is to give us eternal life, to give us all that He has, and to bring us home again in families to the arms of His love. In rejecting His counsel, we choose the influence of another power, whose purpose is to make us miserable and whose motive is hatred. We have moral agency as a gift of God. Rather than the right to choose to be free of influence, it is the inalienable right to submit ourselves to whichever of those powers we choose.

Standing on Safe Ground

Another fallacy is to believe that the choice to accept or not accept the counsel of prophets is no more than deciding whether to accept good advice and gain its benefits or to stay where we are. But the choice not to take prophetic counsel changes the very ground upon which we stand. That ground becomes more dangerous. The failure to take prophetic counsel lessens our power to take inspired counsel in the future. The best time to have decided to help Noah build the ark was the first time he asked. Each time he asked after that, each failure to respond would have lessened sensitivity to the Spirit. And so each time his request would have seemed more foolish, until the rain came. And then it was too late.

Every time in my life when I have chosen to delay following inspired counsel or decided that I was an exception, I came to know that I had put myself in harm’s way. Every time that I have listened to the counsel of prophets, felt it confirmed in prayer, and then followed it, I have found that I moved toward safety. Along the path, I have found that the way had been prepared for me and the rough places made smooth. God led me to safety along a path that was prepared with loving care, sometimes prepared long before.

The account at the beginning of the Book of Mormon is of a prophet of God, Lehi. He was also the leader of a



family. He was warned by God to take those he loved to safety. Lehi's experience is a type of what happens as God gives counsel through His servants. Of Lehi's family, only those who had faith and who themselves received confirming revelation saw both the danger and the way to safety. For those without faith, the move into the wilderness seemed not only foolish but dangerous. Like all prophets, Lehi, to his dying day, tried to show his family where safety would lie for them.

He knew that the Savior holds responsible those to whom He delegates priesthood keys. With those keys comes the power to give counsel that will show us the way to safety. Those with keys are responsible to warn even when their counsel might not be followed.

Keys are delegated down a line that passes from the prophet through those responsible for ever-smaller groups of members, closer and closer to families and to individuals. That is one of the ways by which the Lord makes a stake a place of safety. For instance, I have sat with my wife in a meeting of parents called by our bishop so that he could warn us of

spiritual dangers faced by our children. I heard more than the voice of my wise friend. I heard a servant of Jesus Christ, with keys, meeting his responsibility to warn and passing to us, the parents, the responsibility to act. When we honor the keys of that priesthood channel by listening and giving heed, we tie ourselves to a lifeline that will not fail us in any storm.

Our Heavenly Father loves us. He sent His Only Begotten Son to be our Savior. He knew that in mortality we would be in grave danger, the worst of it from the temptations of a terrible adversary. That is one of the reasons the Savior has provided priesthood keys, so that those with ears to hear and faith to obey could go to places of safety.

Having Listening Ears

Having listening ears requires humility. You remember the Lord's warning to Thomas B. Marsh. He was then the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The Lord knew that President Marsh and his Brethren of the Twelve would be tested. He gave counsel about taking counsel. The Lord said, "Be

The best time to have decided to help Noah build the ark was the first time he asked. Each time he asked after that, each failure to respond would have lessened sensitivity to the Spirit.



LEHI PREACHING IN JERUSALEM, BY DEL PARSON, © IRI

Lehi's experience is a type of what happens as God gives counsel through His servants. Of Lehi's family, only those who had faith and who themselves received confirming revelation saw both the danger and the way to safety.

thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers" (D&C 112:10).

The Lord added a warning that is applicable to any who follow a living prophet: "Exalt not yourselves; rebel not against my servant Joseph; for verily I say unto you, I am with him, and my hand shall be over him; and the keys which I have given unto him, and also to youward, shall not be taken from him till I come" (D&C 112:15).

God offers us counsel not just for our own safety but for the safety of His other children, whom we should love. There are few comforts so sweet as to know that we have been an instrument in the hands of God in leading someone else to safety. That blessing generally requires the faith to follow counsel when it is hard to do.

An example from Church history is that of Reddick Newton Allred. He was one of the rescue party sent out by President Brigham Young (1801–77) to bring in the Willie and Martin handcart companies. At the Sweetwater River near South Pass, Captain George Grant asked Reddick Allred to remain there with a few men and wagons and be ready to help

when the rescuers returned with the handcart pioneers.

The rescuers found the Willie company mired in the snow, freezing, starving, and dying. Some of the rescuers continued to search for the Martin company, while the others helped the Willie company make that heartrending pull up and over Rocky Ridge. Soon after they made camp, Reddick Allred and his men came to deliver essential assistance and supplies.

Allred then waited for Captain Grant to return with the Martin company. Week after week passed with no sign of them. As blizzards howled and the weather became life threatening, two of the men decided it was foolish to stay. They thought the Martin company had either wintered over somewhere or perished. They decided to return to the Salt Lake Valley and tried to persuade everyone else to do the same. Allred refused to budge. President Young had sent them out, and Captain Grant, Reddick Allred's priesthood leader, had told him to wait there.

Those who returned took several wagons, filled with needed supplies, and started back to the Salt Lake Valley. Even more tragic, they

turned back 77 wagons that were coming from the valley to help. Some of these wagons returned all the way to Big Mountain before messengers sent by President Young met them and turned them back around.

Finally, more than three weeks after Reddick Allred had assisted the Willie company, Captain Grant arrived with the Martin company. These pioneers were even more destitute and had suffered dozens of deaths. Captain Grant's rescue team was small and low on provisions—and still more than 200 miles (320 km) from the Salt Lake Valley. Once again, because Reddick Allred had stayed true to his assignment, even in the most trying circumstances, he was able to provide life-sustaining assistance and supplies.⁴

Reaching Out to Others

You will hear and read inspired counsel from prophets of God to reach out to new members of the Church. Those with the faith of Reddick Newton Allred will keep offering friendship even when it seems not to be needed or to have no effect. They will persist. When some new member reaches the point of spiritual exhaustion, members of faith will be there offering kind words and fellowship. They will then feel the same divine approval Brother Allred felt when he saw those handcart pioneers struggling toward him, knowing he could offer them safety because he had followed counsel when it was hard to do.

While the record does not prove it, I am confident that Brother Allred prayed while he waited. I am confident that his prayers were answered. He then knew that the counsel to stand fast was from God. We must pray to know that. I promise you such prayers of faith will be answered.

Sometimes we will receive counsel that we cannot understand or that seems not to apply to us, even after careful prayer and thought. Don't discard the counsel, but hold it close. If someone you trusted handed you what appeared to be nothing more than sand with the promise that it contained gold, you might wisely hold it in your hand awhile, shaking it gently. Every time I have done that with counsel from a prophet, after a time the gold flakes have begun to appear, and I have been grateful.

We are blessed to live in a time when the priesthood keys are on the earth. We are blessed to know where to look and how to listen for the voice that will fulfill the promise of the Lord that He will gather us to safety. I pray that we will have humble hearts, that we will listen, that we will pray, and that we will wait for the deliverance of the Lord that is sure to come as we are faithful. ■

NOTES

1. Philo Dibble, in "Early Scenes in Church History," *Four Faith Promoting Classics* (1968), 90.
2. *History of the Church*, 5:137.
3. See, for example, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* (1982), 327; "To the Fathers in Israel," *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 49; "Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 69.
4. See Rebecca Bartholomew and Leonard J. Arrington, *Rescue of the 1856 Handcart Companies* (1992), 29, 33–34.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

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

1. Read the account of Reddick Allred's faithfulness. Ask family members what they might have done in that situation. Ask, How does following the prophet keep us safe? How might our own obedience affect the safety of others around us?
2. Ask the family how they can respond to a challenge on which the prophets have given counsel, such as dressing modestly or avoiding questionable material in the media. *For the Strength of Youth* (item no. 36550) offers counsel on many of today's challenges.
3. Read together the second paragraph under the heading "A Prophet's Warning." Ask family members to recall the most recent general conference. Invite them to share gospel principles they remember hearing more than one speaker mention. Bear testimony that we are blessed to live in a time when the Lord provides multiple witnesses for His words.

Making Time to Be Holy

BY ADAM C. OLSON
Church Magazines

On the streets of Hong Kong, life rushes by at a frenetic pace. Day or night, the throng moves in an orderly but hurried race from place to place. People pour into the subway and spill out the other side on their way to work, the marketplace, or school.

In a culture that prizes hard work and accomplishment, it can seem like there aren't enough hours in the day to do it all.

"I need more time," sighs Ng Kathy Ka-Lai, while taking a break with some of her young single adult friends at the end of a busy Sunday.

The friends are learning from experience that the world can be both insistent and smothering. It can pull a person in a dozen directions at once while worming its way into whatever time he or she has left. The world's demands on us can leave little time for spiritual things. And if we're not careful, before we realize it we are at the mercy of the world rather than in a position to call upon the mercy of God.

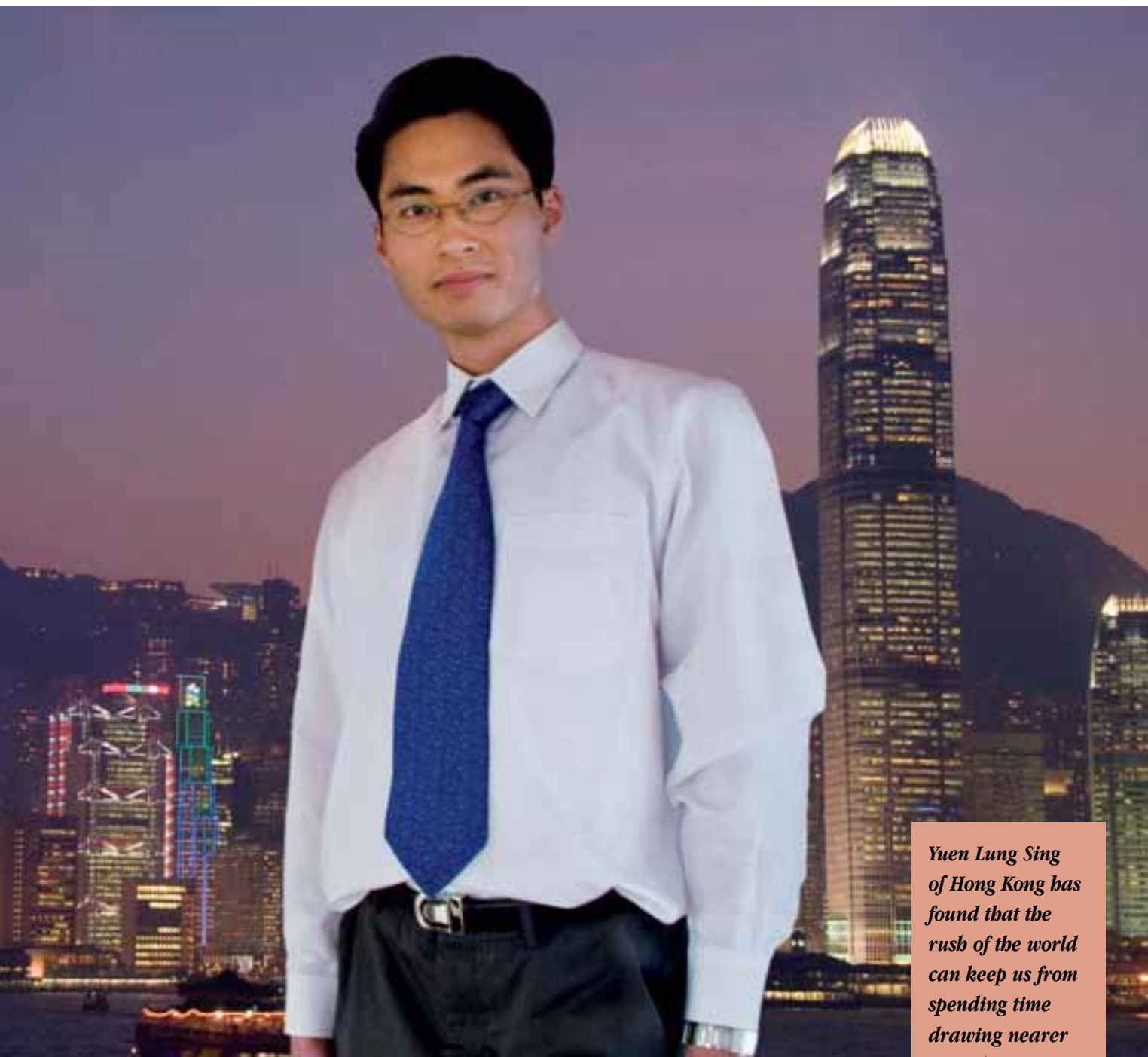
The World Rushes On

Kathy and her friends know how easy it is to get caught in the rush of the world.



Chow Shu Wai, 28, a manufacturing supervisor, works 70 hours a week. Yuen Lung Sing, 29, works more than 50 hours a week as a structural engineer. Kathy, 28, also works about 50 hours per week in sales and customer service. Chan Misty Lai Ming, a 27-year-old research assistant, and Tsang Dick Hing Leung, a 28-year-old mechanical engineer, both work about 45 hours.

And then these faithful young adult members accept



Yuen Lung Sing of Hong Kong has found that the rush of the world can keep us from spending time drawing nearer to God.

the added responsibilities that come with Church callings, in which they each spend 5 to 15 hours a week. The group includes a stake Young Women president, a counselor in the stake Young Men presidency, a counselor in the ward Sunday School presidency, a president of the region institute council, and a stake young single adult representative.

To find some time for personal spiritual renewal, the friends say one has to plan for it. That sometimes means

getting creative or sleeping less, including getting up earlier, going to bed later, and making use of commuting time and breaks at work.

“If we have the will to make time for things like scripture study, then it is easy to find time for them,” says Dick. “It’s when we don’t have a plan that we are more likely to waste any free time we find.”



NOT ENOUGH TIME?

“We will have to make some hard choices of how we use our time. But there should never be a conscious choice to let the spiritual become secondary as a pattern in our lives. Never. . . .

“ . . . When we put God’s purposes first, He will give us miracles. . . .

“ . . . Those apparent prison walls of ‘not enough time’ will begin to recede, even as you are called to do more.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Education for Real Life,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2002, 18, 20, 21.

Beware of Distractions

That’s because when the world isn’t demanding your attention with work and other responsibilities, it is usually trying to win your attention with other ways to fill your time.

“There are a lot of distractions in the world,” says Misty. For example, Misty mentions MP3 players, which allow you to take your favorite music with you wherever you go, but they can keep you from concentrating.

“I gave up my MP3 player almost a year ago,” she says. “It made it too hard to focus. I can’t think or ponder with my MP3 player going.”

Dick talks about TV. “If I have time for TV, I have time for scriptures,” he says. “We need to find a balance and do the right thing at the right time.”

For these young adults, the problem is not watching bad shows or listening to inappropriate music. The problem is letting entertainment take up what little time they have for spiritual things. Or as Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “When things of the world crowd in, all too often the wrong things take highest priority. . . . Satan has a powerful tool to use against good people. It is distraction. He would have good people fill life with ‘good things’ so there is no room for the essential ones.”¹

Sanctify Yourself

In trying to free themselves from the world, Dick, Kathy, Lung, Misty, and Shu are

learning their responsibility to do as the Lord says, “Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy” (Leviticus 20:7). The friends discussed how to seek sanctification.

1. By Faith

“They shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, that they may become sanctified in me” (Ether 4:7).

Faith leads to action, and these young adults believe that faith in Jesus Christ will lead to Christlike actions.



Throughout the day, Dick tries to think about Jesus as often as possible. “He is our example of holiness. What did Jesus do? What did He say?” he says.

He then tries to live that way.

Because of faith, the friends study the scriptures, attend institute, work with

the missionaries, and serve in the temple. They serve others and share their testimonies when possible. They also show that they are willing to sacrifice their desires in order to be obedient to the Lord.

“My mind *and* my actions must be focused on Jesus Christ,” says Kathy. “I can’t say I want to be more patient but then *do* nothing. If I believe Him and have faith in Him, I can become more like Him.”

2. By Study

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

“When we apply them, the scriptures



When there doesn't seem to be enough time to do everything, we need to give first priority to God, say Tsang Dick Hing Leung, Ng Kathy Ka-Lai, and Yuen Lung Sing.

become answers to help us face and solve our problems in life,” Dick says of his experience with scripture study.

Each of the friends agrees. And each of them reports trying to make time each day for scripture study, whether it's a half hour before work or bed or during their commutes.

Study, accompanied by prayerful pondering, opens us to inspiration, says Lung, and can even change our natures.²

“The scriptures deepen my understanding of the gospel,” Lung says. “I can feel the Spirit, and it draws me closer to God.”

3. By Sacrifice

“Sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God” (Helaman 3:35).

“The Savior asks us to be willing to sacrifice our own desires in order to follow God,” says Kathy.

“We must be willing to give up worldly things,” Misty agrees.

Lung, for example, talks about the young man in the Gospel of Luke who asked Jesus what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. The man had kept the commandments from a young age, but he was unwilling to give up his

riches when Jesus invited him to sell all that he had to follow the Savior (see Luke 18:18–23).

“He needed to sacrifice things he cared for to follow Christ,”

Lung explains. “We all have those things—not necessarily riches—but things that keep us from following Him.”

An example they discussed is King Lamoni's father being willing to give up all his sins to know God (see Alma 22:18).

“God wants to find out if we have faith to follow Him. He wants our hearts,” Misty says. “He wants to know what we love more. This is how we become His disciples.”

“To become holy, we must sacrifice our will, our desires,” says Shu.

4. By Obedience

“That which is governed by law is also preserved by law and perfected and sanctified by the same” (D&C 88:34).

Sacrificing our desires is sanctifying when we do it in order to do the Lord's will, live our covenants, and keep His commandments.

“God has given us laws,” says Dick. “Obedience to them sanctifies us.”



Being willing to sacrifice worldly pursuits in order to make time for God brings great blessings, according to Chow Shu Wai and Chan Misty Lai Ming.

“We would receive more blessings if we were more willing to obey,” says Kathy. “We can be happy keeping His law.”

5. By the Atonement

“We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10).

“To me, being holy means being worthy to be in the presence of God, to be pure,” says Lung. “This is possible only through the Atonement.”

“He has experienced all our difficulties already,” Misty says. “The feelings we have, He’s felt already. There is great power in the Atonement to make us holy as He is holy” (see Moroni 10:32–33).

Kathy says that part of allowing the Atonement to affect our lives is to “remember what the Savior has done” for us.

Dick says He feels the effects of the Atonement when he repents and keeps the commandments on a daily basis, allowing the Lord to make him clean—an example of how we can sanctify ourselves so the Lord can sanctify us (see Leviticus 20:7–8).

In the World, but Not of the World

These young adults are making time to be holy and freeing themselves from worldly things because the Lord has commanded us to “organize yourselves, and prepare yourselves, and sanctify yourselves; yea, purify your hearts, and cleanse your hands and your feet before me . . .”

But why He has commanded us to be holy is as important as understanding how to accomplish it.

“. . . that I may make you clean; that I may testify unto your Father, and your God, and my God, that you are clean from the blood of this wicked generation” (D&C 88:74–75).

“Life can be crazy,” says Dick, looking out over the endless bustle of Hong Kong at night. “When we make time for the Savior in life, we can have His help to overcome our challenges. Nothing in the world is as important to me as being able to return to my Father in Heaven.” ■

NOTES

1. “First Things First,” *Liabona*, July 2001, 7; *Ensign*, May 2001, 7.
2. See Boyd K. Packer, “Do Not Fear,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2004, 77.



IT STARTED WITH GIRLS' CAMP AND AN ENSIGN

BY PENNY HAGENBUCH

In May 2000, my daughter, Breanna, was invited to go to Young Women camp. Since we were not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I was reluctant to allow her to attend. Coincidentally, the same week I began attending a three-day seminar on Latter-day Saint beliefs presented by my own church. I left the first session with more questions than when I walked in. The ideas presented at the seminar were not favorable to the Church, and this made me even more curious, since I had LDS friends whom I respected and admired.

I decided to call a Latter-day Saint neighbor, and I invited her over to talk about the Church. Though she had not attended church in a while, she shared her testimony and offered me a copy of the general conference issue of the *Ensign*. Immediately after she left, I began to read the magazine. I read the entire issue straight through that afternoon. The conference talks spoke to me in a way that I had not experienced before, except when reading the Bible.

The next day I telephoned the mother of the girl who had invited my daughter to girls' camp. I told her I was afraid Breanna might feel uncomfortable being the only non-LDS girl at camp. She reassured me, explaining that at camp the girls have fun learning life skills and participating in lots of activities. If Breanna expressed a desire to go home, she would take her home immediately. During our conversation, I mentioned that I had read an issue of the *Ensign* and liked it.

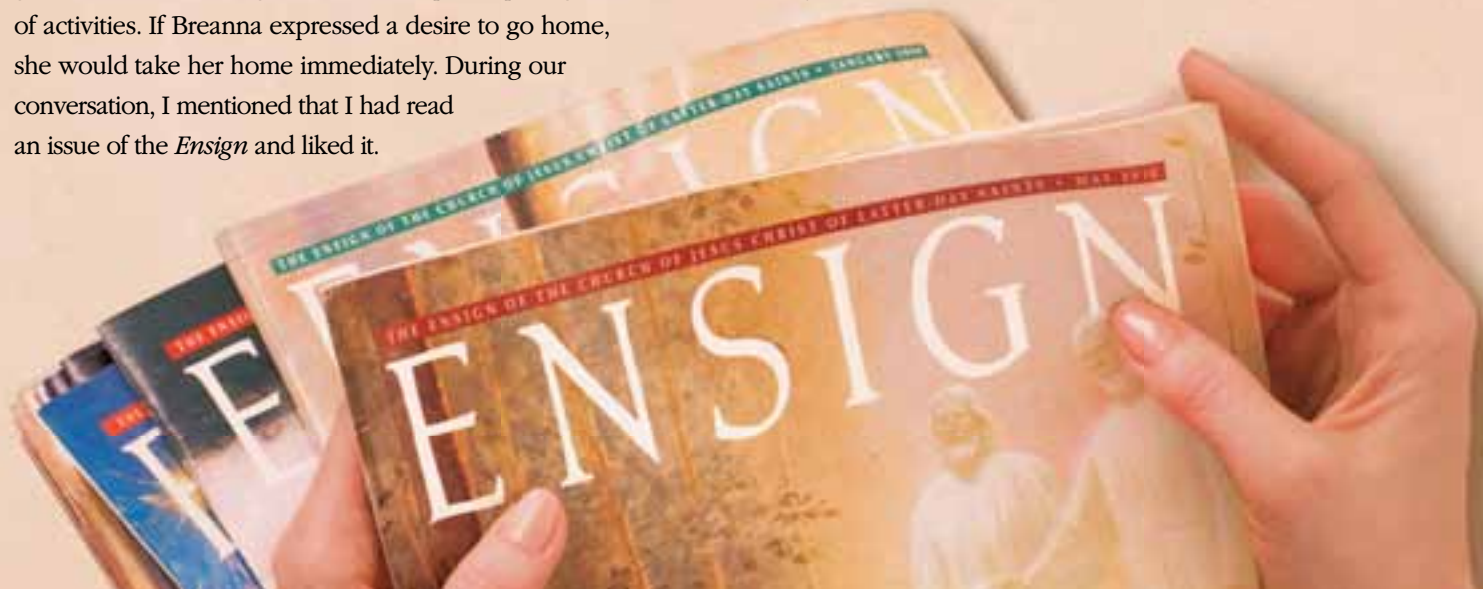
She said she had some back issues that she could bring over to me. I told her, "Yes, please. I would love to read more!"

The next day she brought me two years of neatly boxed issues of the *Ensign*. I began reading them and couldn't get enough. I felt the Spirit with me as I read, and I began to pray before and after reading each issue. I finished reading them all in one week!

I didn't attend the remainder of the seminar sessions at my church. After receiving spiritual guidance while reading the *Ensign*, I didn't feel the need to return there at all. A few days later, my daughter went to Young Women camp and returned with her own testimony. She began taking the missionary lessons from two wonderful sister missionaries, while I eavesdropped from the kitchen. Each time the missionaries left, I scoured the pamphlets they left and searched for cross-references in my Bible. Soon I began taking the missionary lessons too.

In October 2000 my daughter and I were baptized members of the Church, and now we have our own subscription to the *Ensign*. Our lives changed forever thanks to an invitation to Young Women camp, an *Ensign* general conference issue from a less-active member (who is now active again), two years of back issues of the *Ensign* magazine, and the testimony of two faithful missionaries. ■

PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHEW REIER



Tending the Flock

TEACHING LEADERSHIP SKILLS TO YOUTH



From an interview with President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, and Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

To some youth, adulthood seems a long way off. But before long, the rising generation will be leaders in their homes and in the Church. What can we teach them now?

Preparing the rising generation to build strong families, to lead the Church, and to return to their Heavenly Father is an important responsibility—one that involves leaders, teachers, and, most of all, parents. “The responsibility of building leadership in the Church belongs to the father and the mother,” Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explains. “As youth grow and mature through their teenage years and move toward adulthood, the Church picks up an important role in this process of giving youth an opportunity to lead, but it begins in the home.”

Here, Elder Ballard and President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, share 10 principles related to teaching leadership skills to youth, distilled from their own observations and experiences.

1. Start at Home

Teaching leadership in the home can be done in even the simplest of circumstances, such as when a parent is preparing a meal or repairing something around the house, Elder Ballard says.

“In my judgment, there is no substitute for fathers or mothers taking a child—even when the child is young—and showing the child what they’re doing and how they’re doing it. The child grows up knowing a lot about life and how to do things just by being at the elbow of his or her father or mother. It also helps the child feel like he or she is part of the family council process.

“There are situations where young people don’t have both a father and a mother in the home. We certainly understand that. But somebody is raising them, and that person is number one in teaching them how to do things and how to lead.”

Gospel learning can happen in the home even when youth are members of the Church but their parents are not, President Uchtdorf says. Ward or branch leaders can invite parents—regardless of



Having the opportunity to teach, even in small settings, is essential for young people. Teaching, says President Uchtdorf, is the essence of leadership.

whether the parents are Latter-day Saints—to be involved in their children’s Church activity. Some of the best methods are through tools that already exist.

“Leaders can take advantage of the established tools the Church has—the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet and the Duty to God and Personal Progress programs. The *Guidebook for Parents and Leaders of Youth* explains how we can help our youth succeed in these programs and develop leadership skills,” President Uchtdorf says. “Take those tools into the homes of the young people. Invite the parents to help their children accomplish the goals and tasks and the other good things that are offered.

“This will take special effort on the part of the leaders, but it will help these parents establish the leadership potential that is based on the family. It will also show them what we are all about. It will show them that the Church unites families and that it presents wonderful values—values that make us more Christlike. It will show these parents that we ‘talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ . . . that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins’ (2 Nephi 25:26). If we use what we have in place, we can help all of our youth become leaders.”

2. Teach in a Council Setting

Elder Ballard notes that it’s not uncommon for adult leaders to assume responsibility that actually belongs to the youth. “Leadership among youth grows when the leaders counsel carefully with their organization,” he says. “For example, let’s say a deacons quorum has five boys who are active and three who are not. Whose responsibility

is it to recover the three who are not active? Far too many leaders would say it’s theirs.”

Instead, a leader should bring the matter into a council setting with the members of the quorum presidency and ask, “What are we going to do, how are we going to do it, and who’s going to do what?” Elder Ballard says.

“If youth see a bishop or another leader who runs everything, who doesn’t involve others, and who doesn’t bring into council all the resources that he has, the youngsters are going to think that’s what a leader does. It’s a great tragedy when a bishop thinks, ‘This is *my* ward, and we’re going to do it *my* way,’ losing sight that it’s the Lord’s ward. We ought to be seeking to know what *He* wants us to do and how *He* wants us to bring resources together to make things happen.”

3. Provide Teaching Opportunities at Home and at Church

Having opportunities to teach—even simple ones such as bearing testimony, giving a thought on a scripture, or standing up for gospel principles in small discussions—are essential for young people, President Uchtdorf says. He adds that teaching is the essence of leadership.

“Often our young people are the only members at their schools, so they need to learn that they are truly valuable and that they know their religion. They need to understand that whatever they’re doing, they’re always teaching. If we provide our young people with teaching opportunities, encouraging them not to be ashamed of the gospel, we will help them greatly.”

The organization of the Church provides opportunities for not only spiritual growth but growth in other areas. President Uchtdorf says of his career in aviation, “Everything that

helped me to accomplish what I did in my professional life, I learned through the Church.”

He says he now sees the same thing happening with members of his family. “My grandsons are known as members of the Church, and they are known as the best presenters in their classes. Why? Because they have learned these skills at home and in the Church setting. They’re not even cognizant of that kind of learning—it just happens.”

4. Help Them Overcome Fear

When Elder Ballard was in his late 20s, he was called to be a bishop. “I faced great anxiety,” he recalls. “I’d never been a bishop before. Both of my counselors were old enough to be my father. I thought about all the bishops I’d ever had and tried to glean from their examples those things that I admired and thought were worthwhile. But ultimately *doing* the assignment, whatever it is, helps you overcome that fear.”

Fear is inherent with a new assignment, Elder Ballard adds. “A 12-year-old who is made the deacons quorum president will have some apprehension. He might wonder, ‘How do I conduct a meeting?’ Well, he’s shown how to do it. He may stumble, and it may be difficult. But after a few times, he knows that he can do it. He has taken a giant step forward. Once you know how to do something, all of a sudden you can lead without fear.”

Confidence also comes in understanding who we are, President Uchtdorf adds. “Take Moses in the Pearl of Great Price. He learns that he is created in the similitude of God and that God has a work for him to do. When you know you’re on the Lord’s errand, it’s different. That’s why our young people need to know who they are and that the Lord will be with them.

“When I was a teenager, a missionary

was teaching our class because we were a small branch. One thing he said hit me hard: ‘When God is with you, who can be against you?’ This kind of confidence gives you the power to do things even if you’re afraid, even if you feel you’re not qualified to do them.”

5. Let Them Learn Their Duty

Leaders may be inclined to conduct, provide the music, or pray at a youth fireside or other meeting, but they should be “shadow leaders,” overseeing the youth who perform these functions, President Uchtdorf says.

“This can be a challenge for parents and leaders because they know that they can probably do it faster or better. It takes patience to let the youth do it. Sometimes that involves letting them stumble. The scripture says, ‘That my people may be taught more perfectly, and *have experience*, and know more perfectly concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands’ (D&C 105:10; emphasis added).

“You set the example and let them learn. Consider the Savior. He lets *us* do *His* work here in our different callings. He is patient with us. That is what we need to do with our young people.”



Elder Ballard relates as an example an experience he shared with a returned-missionary grandson who wanted to hang some things on the cinder-block walls of his apartment. Elder Ballard went to his grandson's apartment to show him how to drill holes and put in anchors.

"I did one and then asked him where he wanted to put the next one. He showed me, and I said, 'OK, put it there. You saw me do it. Now you do it. Here's the drill.' So he did it. And he did the rest of them too. He went slowly because he was nervous. I could have done it twice as fast. But now he knows how. It built his confidence. If he wants to hang something else, he'll just come borrow the tool. I hope he brings it back!"

6. Give Them the Big Picture

It's important to explain to youth that one of the reasons they're asked to obey and to serve is that they will lead families and the Church in the future. But their obedience and service will do more than prepare them for their future family and Church responsibilities; they will also prepare them to fulfill their personal missions in life.

Focusing on the big picture blesses not only the youth but also their leaders, President Uchtdorf says. "Sometimes I think we focus too much on details. If our adult leaders bring the big picture of our purpose and potential to the

hearts and minds of the young people, the details will be easily managed."

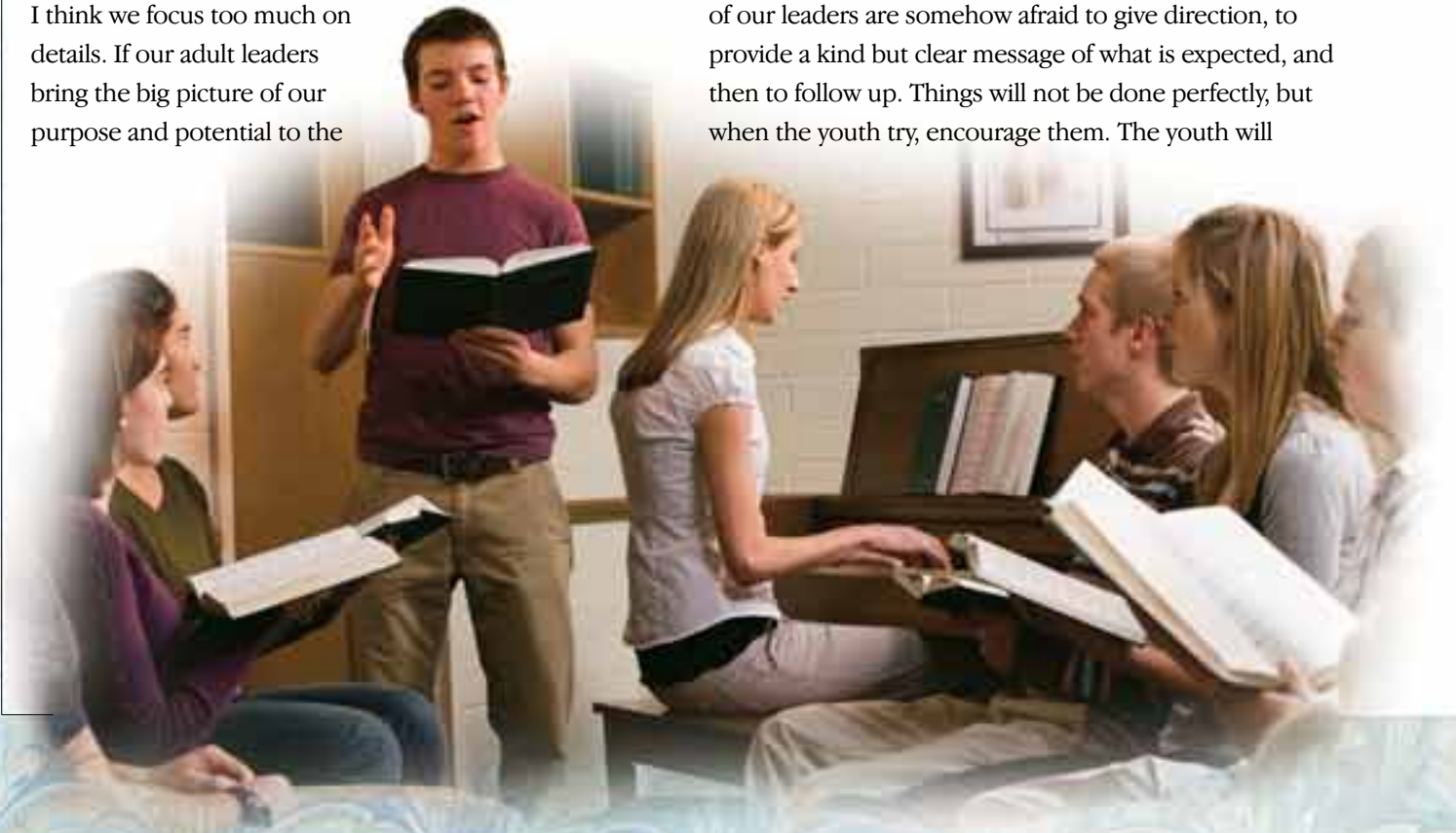
Understanding and communicating clearly and kindly with youth are also critical, he adds. "When I was 13, I was called as the deacons quorum president. Our branch president took a few minutes to find a classroom and meet with me, out of the hallway, and tell me what I needed to do. He gave me wonderful instruction of what was expected of me, both by him and by the Lord.

"Do you know how many deacons we had in our class? Two. But he still took the time to prepare himself and prepare me. That was 50 years ago, and I still remember how it touched my heart. He wanted me to succeed. He gave his personal attention and time. He gave kind but direct instructions, and he followed up."

7. Establish Accountability

The Lord doesn't need admirers; He needs followers, President Uchtdorf says. "You learn to be a leader by first learning to be a follower. The scripture says to 'act,' not to be 'acted upon'" (2 Nephi 2:26).

"The next step is to follow up. That's what we learn in the temple—the return-and-report principle. But some of our leaders are somehow afraid to give direction, to provide a kind but clear message of what is expected, and then to follow up. Things will not be done perfectly, but when the youth try, encourage them. The youth will



remember that. They may not remember the words, but they will remember the feelings.”

8. Know That You’re Entitled to Inspiration

When Elder Ballard was a young bishop, a rowdy nine-year-old boy caused his Primary teacher a lot of angst. After several weeks the teacher escorted the boy into the bishop’s office and said, “Bishop, here’s one of your flock. Tend it.”

Bishop Ballard wasn’t sure what to do. But at that moment an impression came: ask the child to report every week about his behavior in Primary. Bishop Ballard issued that challenge, and it changed the boy’s attitude. The child saw that he could do things differently.

“I didn’t have that idea of accountability in mind before he landed on my doorstep,” Elder Ballard says. “But the Lord, by the power of the Spirit, inspires a worthy and a righteous teacher or leader to know what to do and what to say to bring the best out of anyone, in particular our young people.”

Incidentally, that nine-year-old turned out to be “terrific,” Elder Ballard says. He served a mission, married in the temple, and became a great leader.

The spiritual preparation required for inspiration takes work, President Uchtdorf says, but it is essential. He learned a similar lesson during his career as a pilot. Flying 747 airplanes was fun, he says, but the preparation required to get the 747 off the ground was a lot of work. “For a teacher or leader, the work part is prayer and knowing what the individual young man or woman needs. Leaders also need to ensure that the youth program is not fun and games only but a wonderful, joyful occurrence to help them progress in their young lives and become what they’re meant to become.”

9. Take It Back to the Home

Ultimately, leaders—particularly bishoprics—need to be responsible for appropriately advising and teaching parents about what is going on with the youth of the ward. Bishops and branch presidents should not betray personal, confidential matters, but they *can* teach collectively about general concerns.

“If I were a bishop today,” says Elder Ballard, “I believe I would not hesitate to go to the priesthood and Relief Society discussion on the fifth Sunday and talk to the parents about some of the concerns I had about the youth. I would tell them, ‘What I know about your youngsters as a result of the interviewing I’ve done over the years is between them and me, and they know that. I won’t betray their confidences. But in general we’ve got a problem. You parents need to know about and deal with this. . . .’ Some parents may be afraid to hear the real issues going on. But they need to know.”

10. Realize the Eternal Potential of the Youth

“We have raised the bar,” says Elder Ballard. “But that doesn’t raise it just for the youth. That raises it for the parents, who have the primary responsibility for teaching their children principles. That raises it for the leaders. That raises it for the teachers. We’ve all got to take a step up in a world that is unraveling as fast as this one is.

“We see that they love the Lord,” he continues. “Remember that He loves them. Inside the little body of that young man or young woman you’re teaching is an eternal spirit. These young people belong to our Heavenly Father, and He has great interest in the lives of all His children. We need to keep the fire of that testimony burning in them.” ■

Although fear is inherent with new assignments, Elder Ballard says, doing the assignment helps us overcome that feeling and gives us confidence to continue.

BY CAROLYN RUSCH

When my testimony of eternal families began to waver, I sought answers in the temple.

I love the message in the hymn “Families Can Be Together Forever,” and yet following the untimely death of my husband, I found my testimony of eternal families wavering. I needed to find out for myself if what I had grown up believing was really true.

I made my search a matter of prayer, but I did not receive an answer right away. Eventually, I decided to attend the temple often and spend as much time as I could praying and pondering over my question. Early one morning as I entered the temple chapel, I immediately recognized the person playing the organ. I glanced in her direction in hopes of being able to give her a friendly smile, but she was intent on her playing and seemed unaware of the people gathering in the chapel. I focused on the quiet music in hopes it would bring peace to my troubled soul while I prayed. After playing several hymns, the organist

Families *Can Be*



ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT T. BARRETT

began to play “Nearer, My God, to Thee.” This hymn had been one of the songs sung at my husband’s funeral. I sang the words of the hymn in my mind and then returned to my prayer.

Soon the time came for us to leave the chapel. As we did so, I glanced at my friend, who was hurriedly turning the pages in her binder as though she were having trouble finding a particular hymn. Just as I was walking out the door, she began to play the hymn “Families Can Be Together Forever.” Tears filled my eyes, for this was the other song we had sung at my husband’s funeral. I couldn’t remember if the organist had attended his funeral or not, but even if she had, I doubted she could remember the songs we had sung. It occurred to me that this probably was not a coincidence that she had played both of those songs, and I knew I had received an answer to my petition. Yes, families *can* be together forever.

Later, I called my friend and asked if she had seen me in the temple. When she said she had, I told her what had happened. She began to cry, and for several moments could not speak. Then she told me that each time she sits at the organ, she asks Heavenly Father to help her know what songs she should play to touch the hearts of people who have come to the temple with questions or concerns. After seeing me in the chapel, she offered a quick prayer on my behalf. Then feeling the promptings of the Holy Ghost, she knew the hymns she needed to play. This had happened to her many times in the past, but she never knew if what she played had made a difference to anyone. My call confirmed to her that her prayers had indeed been answered this time and most assuredly on other occasions as well.

We both cried as we realized that the Lord, through His tender mercies, had answered both our prayers. Our experience in the temple that day helped each of us gain a profound testimony of our Heavenly Father’s love and concern for each of His children. We learned that He truly hears our prayers and answers them. ■

gether Forever

Armor of Battle,

Separation has always been one of the biggest challenges military families face. Nevertheless, families can find comfort and unity as they strive to grow closer to the Savior and to each other.

Five Latter-day Saints from military families share where they turned for comfort during the time they were separated.

Turning to the Lord

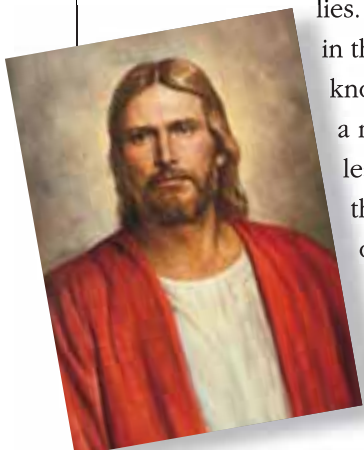
I grew up in a military family. My father served in the Vietnam War. At that time I was a young adult but old enough to know the effects that military life has on fami-

lies. I married a man who serves in the military, so I also know what it is like to be a military wife. I have learned that though the names and places of the wars may change, the impact on the human heart is the same.

I have great compassion for all who are

facing the challenges of maintaining a marriage and family while a spouse is on military deployment. As a Latter-day Saint, I have learned that I must first seek to learn of Jesus Christ before peace comes. He is the source not only of my spiritual well-being but also of my mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

As I have learned more about the Atonement, I see that it not only includes the redemption of our sins but that it is the means by which our Savior



THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY DEL PARSON

Armor of God



helps us through our trials and heals us. Alma taught that Christ “will take upon him [our] infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:12).

There are still times when my challenges overwhelm me, but knowing gospel truths gives my life and my experiences a spiritual significance and they become a source of strength. I strive to keep my focus on remembering the One who can truly help. The Lord has provided a rich array of spiritual tools to help in times of adversity. He has blessed me with the things I have needed and wiped away my tears.

Brenda McDonald, Germany

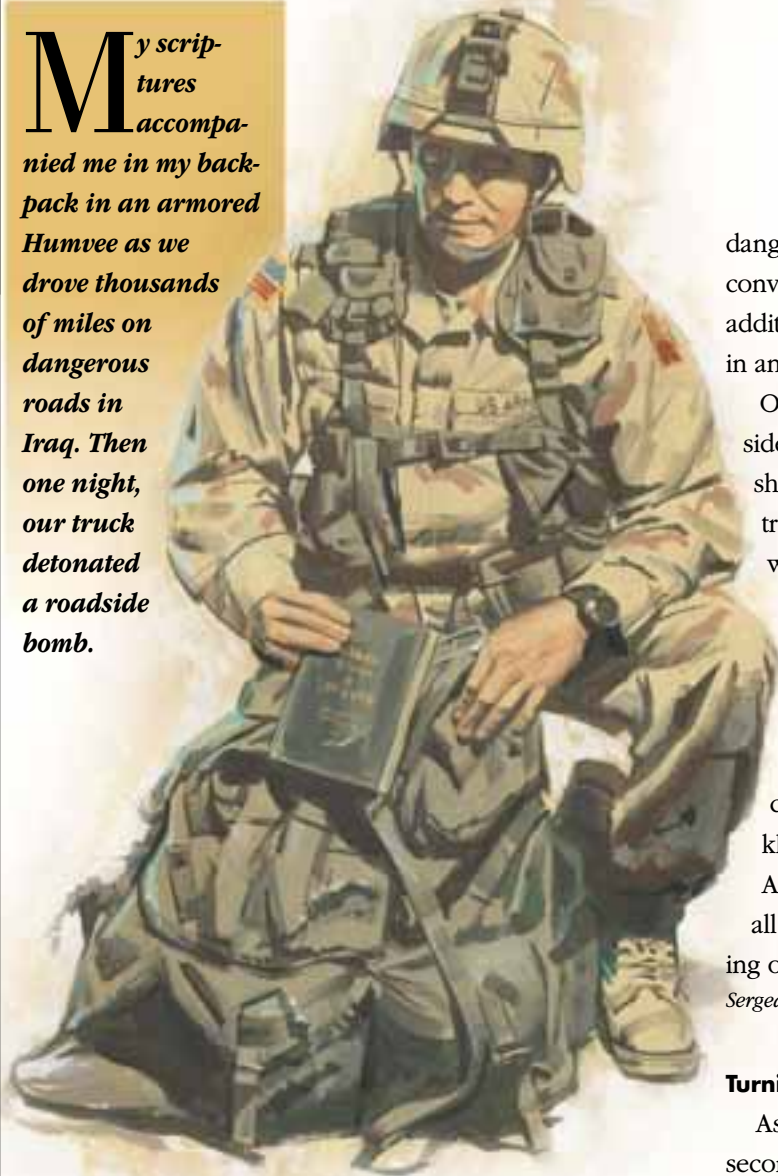
Turning to the Scriptures

When I joined the military, I packed my inexpensive scriptures. They had come into my life near the end of my mission when my expensive leather scriptures were stolen. These scriptures have been with me through a lot of experiences.

They accompanied me to the deserts of Utah, where I was teaching at-risk youth. During that time my scriptures acquired a campfire

ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAUL MANN

My scriptures
tured
accompanied me in my backpack in an armored Humvee as we drove thousands of miles on dangerous roads in Iraq. Then one night, our truck detonated a roadside bomb.



smell as I spent late-night hours reading next to a dwindling pile of coals.

As I was beginning military training, my scriptures were with me. On days when our drill sergeants would allow us extra “cleaning time,” I would sneak off to my bed to read my scriptures. Over time they became the means of inviting inquiry from friends, teaching investigators the gospel, and leading a few of my fellow soldiers into the waters of baptism. My scriptures provided comfort and enlightenment during a stressful time.

After my marriage, these same scriptures spent many nights with us as we read from their pages. It wasn’t long before my scriptures were again forced into an over-packed army duffel bag destined for the sands of Iraq. They would accompany me in a backpack in the rear of an armored Humvee as I drove thousands of miles on very

dangerous roads in the world helping provide security for convoys. My scriptures accumulated new markings and additional scribbles; they continued to teach and edify me in an otherwise hostile environment.

On a night like any other, the detonation of a roadside bomb found us and we rocked back and forth as shrapnel and debris pierced through the armor of our truck. We were towed to safety. After the incident I went through the wreckage trying to recover my gear.

It seemed like everything had been destroyed in the explosion. Then I found what looked like my backpack containing the shattered remnants of my sleeping bag and personal hygiene kit. I also found my scriptures and dusted off the dirt and debris. The cover had only a small tear and the pages were wrinkled a little bit, but they were in amazingly good shape. As I flipped through the familiar pages, I remembered all that we had been through together and a deep feeling of gratitude filled my heart.

Sergeant William M. Deveraux, Utah

Turning to Family

As my husband, Brian, was preparing to leave for his second deployment to Iraq, I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do. Many of my friends were going home to stay with their families for moral and emotional support. A few nights before my husband was set to leave with his unit, I sat quietly on our porch swing and prayed. As I did so, I felt at peace with the idea that I should go stay with my parents and brother in Woodinville, Washington.

While at home I rediscovered a true blessing—family. My dad taught me so much about life and shared his passion for a variety of hobbies. My mom encouraged me daily to keep my head up and make it until the day Brian would come home. My brother, whom I had taken for granted growing up, was a ray of sunshine. On my “Woe is me, I miss my husband” days, he would call and say, “Stop moping and meet me for a movie.”

When my parents sold their house that summer, we

stayed with my grandparents in Idaho. I am so thankful for that opportunity to get to know my grandparents better. I learned home repair skills from Grandpa and improved my quilting and cooking with Grandma. I learned the story of how my grandparents met and fell in love. All the while, I rekindled relationships with my cousins, aunts, and uncles from both sides of my family.

I am so thankful that I had been taught to turn to my Heavenly Father in times of need, especially that night my prayers were answered while sitting on our porch swing.

Now I can honestly say that, along with my husband, my family are among my best friends.

Tania Marble, Kentucky

Turning to Service

Every summer the same annual orders arrived in the mail for my husband to go to Fort Lewis, Washington, and serve as ROTC advance camp staff chaplain. Every summer I had resented the orders and the 3,000 ROTC cadets who

filled my husband's time. However, this year our youngest child was serving a mission in Italy, so I decided to accompany my husband to Fort Lewis. It turned out to be a summer worth waiting for. Why? Because I made up my mind to get involved with others.

I started by volunteering at the army thrift shop. Soon I was attending the Seattle Washington Temple weekly. Before long, I had developed friendships among the military wives.

The turning point in my attitude, however, came on one extraordinary evening when my husband invited me to go with him out into the field and say a few words to the cadets at an all-faith service. Seven evenings a week, chaplain teams drove to combat training sites to ensure each cadet an opportunity to worship. The cadets were under extreme pressure, and many felt the need for the

A *s I began speaking, a petite female cadet appeared distressed. After the meeting she put her arms around me, and we wept together. I realized how much cadets needed my husband as a chaplain.*





HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Share some of the stories from the article with your family. Discuss the fact that even though the gospel of Jesus Christ teaches peace, there are times when righteous individuals need to defend their homes and families. Consider using examples from the scriptures such as David and Goliath (see 1 Samuel 17) or Moroni and the title of liberty (see Alma 46:11–13).
2. As a family discuss how we can always find peace in the Savior.

Turning to One Another

Our children were young when I left on my first hardship tour of duty. As a family we talked extensively about Korea, where I was going.

At that time, letters were the only means of communication between service personnel and their families. Modern technology

has greatly improved the ability of soldiers to communicate with their families through e-mails, teleconferencing, phone calls, the Internet, and a more efficient postal system for letters and packages. Most family members usually hear from a deployed family member once a week, sometimes more.

For most military families, separation is a way of life, in times of peace as well as in times of war. Separation has always been one of the biggest challenges. For most, it is a struggle to keep significant relationships alive and well while separated.

But Latter-day Saints with an understanding of eternal families can grow closer to God. As their relationship with Him grows stronger, so does their relationship with each other. During my time away, I reassessed my priorities and my roles so that I could be a better husband and father when my family was together again. When I returned, I think the relationship between my wife and me was stronger than when I left.

Belief in the eternal nature of families is a significant factor in maintaining a positive family attitude. Although separations are never easy, positive experiences can take place in the lives of those affected as they strive to grow closer to the Savior and to one another. ■

Colonel Ronald Hill, U.S. Army Chaplain, Georgia

NOTE: Military families can find support at LDS.org/Serving in the Church/Military Relations/Resources for Military Members. Go to “Learn More . . .” and click on “Supporting Military Families.” From this screen, follow each of the six topics under “Learn More . . .” for information.

Find additional support on the DVD *Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled: A Message of Peace for Latter-day Saints in Military Service* (item no. 54616) available at Church distribution centers.

Lord, some for the first time. These services meant so much to the cadets that even after a 24-hour maneuver they were willing to meet in heavy rain amid the tall, wet grass and mud.

Fortunately, that night we were meeting in a forest clearing under a full moon.

Suddenly, it was my turn. My eyes adjusted enough in the moonlight to see the young faces of the cadets as they stood or sat reverently dressed in green camouflage among the grass and ferns. One petite female cadet appeared distressed as though wanting to cry out, “What am I doing here?”

With a prayer I turned the flashlight onto my notes and spoke of how much these chaplains and interfaith leaders loved them. “With the love of Christ you are their common cause,” I said. “They’d let you down if they didn’t look beyond their religious differences to see your needs. Perhaps their camaraderie is rare, but you are precious to them and that is what unites them.”

As I sat down, I began to feel like a member of my husband’s team, the Lord’s team. Before the cadets divided into religious affiliation groups, the petite cadet came to me, put her arms around me, and we wept together. Other cadets also came to share their tears.

I knew this brief experience would help me remember how much these cadets needed my husband as a chaplain. I realized that whether my husband and I were together or not, we were a team. We were both needed and could serve others.

As our ministry team drove back through the forest that night, I felt the love of Christ more than I had ever felt it before. The resentment I once harbored was gone. As my husband and I drove the last part of the trip home alone, I realized something more—the love of Christ surpasses everything.

Marilyn Nash Hull, Utah



Experiencing a CHANGE OF HEART



You and I can become beneficiaries of a mighty change of heart and a spiritual rebirth, thereby reaping the promised blessings of peace, love, true joy, and a disposition to do good continually.

BY ELDER KEITH K. HILBIG
Of the Seventy

Some years ago in Eastern Europe, I listened as a young elder stood before his fellow missionaries in zone conference to share an experience that shaped his life. He and his companion had found and taught a middle-aged man named Ivan (name has been changed) in a distant city. Their investigator came from a difficult background, as was reflected in his well-used clothing, ragged beard, and hesitant demeanor.

Life had been harsh and unkind to him.

Without any prior religious training, Ivan had much to overcome. Practices not in harmony with the restored gospel had to be set aside. New principles needed to be accepted and then incorporated. Ivan wanted to learn, and he prepared himself diligently for his baptism and confirmation. His clothing remained threadbare and his beard ragged, but he had taken the first steps. Shortly after Ivan's baptism, the missionary was transferred. He hoped that he might again cross paths with Ivan.



Alma the Younger personally experienced the transformation from being an enemy to God to becoming a new creature, a being who was converted and, therefore, committed to building the kingdom.

Six months later the mission president reassigned the young elder to his former branch. Surprised but eager to return, the elder, with a new companion, came early to sacrament meeting his first Sunday back in the branch. The members were pleased to see the missionary in their midst again. They rushed forward with broad smiles and warm greetings.

The elder recognized nearly everyone in the small congregation. However, he searched in vain among the faces for the man he and his companion had taught and baptized six months earlier. There arose within the elder a sense of disappointment and sadness. Had Ivan returned to his harmful habits? Had he failed to honor his covenant

of baptism? Had he lost the blessings promised by his repentance?

The elder's fears and reflections were interrupted by the approach of an unfamiliar man who was rushing forward to embrace the missionary. The clean-shaven man had a confident smile and an obvious goodness radiating from his countenance. Wearing a white shirt and a carefully knotted tie, he was on his way to prepare the sacrament for the small gathering that Sabbath morning. Only when the man began to speak did the elder recognize him. It was the new Ivan, not the former Ivan they had taught and baptized! The elder saw embodied in his friend the miracle of faith, repentance, and forgiveness; he saw the reality of the Atonement.



President Brigham Young taught that “a new birth” describes those who are “fully and solely devoted to the Spirit of truth and to God.”

The missionary told his peers attending the zone conference that Ivan had changed and grown by every measure during the months the elder had been away from the branch. Ivan had embraced the gospel, and it radiated from him. He had experienced a “change of heart” (Alma 5:26) sufficient both to be baptized and to press forward in the continuing process of conversion. He was preparing for the higher priesthood and the ordinances of the temple. Ivan had indeed been “born again” (Alma 7:14).

As the missionary concluded his remarks, he asked himself aloud, “How much of a ‘change of heart’ have *I* experienced in the past six months?” He continued his self-examination, asking aloud, “Have *I* been ‘born again?’” These are two profound questions that each of us should privately pose on a continuing basis.

In the intervening years I have reflected upon the words of the young missionary and the actions of Ivan. I have pondered the role that a “mighty change” (Alma 5:12) in our hearts and being “spiritually . . . born of God” (Alma 5:14) play in the process of embracing the restored gospel. I have concluded that they are clearly an important part of the Lord’s doctrine, not just one-time experiences in mortality. They are ongoing opportunities, intended to deepen the process of conversion and individual personal refinement. They prepare us more fully for eternal life.

Challenges of Spiritual Rebirth

The challenges of being born again and experiencing a mighty change of heart are challenges we all must face. Some in the Christian community believe they can be born again merely by acknowledging Christ as the Savior of the world, independent of any previous or subsequent personal behavior. Some assert that the *simple recognition* of Christ’s role, combined with the *single expression of belief* in Christ, will suffice to bring us ultimately back into the presence of the Father and the Son. As well-intentioned

as this position may be, it is not accurate.

The New Testament provides numerous references to the concept of being born again but, as it is translated, does not always explain exactly *how* it is achieved. For example, the Savior (see John 3:5–7), John the Baptist (see Matthew 3:11), and Paul (see Romans 6:2–6; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 4:29; Ephesians 4:24) proclaim the principle, but they do not clarify its meaning.

By contrast, the Book of Mormon is a wonderful resource to better understand the process of experiencing a mighty change of heart and of being born again. Its prophets provide a fuller doctrinal declaration of the process. Both phrases are explored more fully by Alma the Younger, who posed three questions to members of the Church: “I ask of you, my brethren of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?” (Alma 5:14).

We know from the standard works that baptism by immersion allows us to become a member of the Church, but that ordinance alone does *not* constitute the spiritual rebirth that allows us to return to the presence of Heavenly Father. Similarly, as we are confirmed following baptism, we have the *right* to the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. However, only when we have truly repented—and thus actually *receive* the Holy Ghost—can we be sanctified and thus be born again spiritually. Hence, Alma’s piercing inquiries are valid for each of us repeatedly throughout life.

President Brigham Young (1801–77) preached of the “new birth” as follows: “There is such a thing as the birth of the Spirit while we live in the flesh.—And when we understand more perfectly our own independent organization, which God has given us, and the spirit world, and the principles and powers that act on this organism, we will learn that a person can be so fully and solely devoted to the Spirit of truth and to God, and be so wrapped up in

that Spirit that it may be called, with propriety, a new birth.”¹

King Benjamin, in a stirring address to his people, counseled them concerning how they should live gospel principles (see Mosiah 2–4). He then boldly asked if they believed his words. Their poignant response provides a powerful example: “And they all cried with one voice, saying: Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2).

They also said, “We are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in *all* things that he shall command us, all the remainder of our days” (Mosiah 5:5; emphasis added).

King Benjamin then explained to them what had happened and with what result, providing an excellent definition of being born again:

“Ye have spoken the words that I desired; and the covenant which ye have made is a righteous covenant.

“And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters” (Mosiah 5:6–7).

These followers of King Benjamin clearly had experienced such an exceeding change of heart that they had no more disposition to do evil; further, they were clearly spiritually begotten, or born again.

Remember that being born again does not eliminate our memory of past sins, but it will provide peace of conscience and relieve the pain of transgression (see Mosiah 27:29; Alma 36:19).



“Members of the Church who have actually been born again,” said Elder Bruce R. McConkie, “have attained their position, not merely by joining the Church, but through faith, righteousness, love, and overcoming the world.”

Blessings of Being Born Again

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminds us that “those members of the Church who have actually been born again are in a blessed and favored state. They have attained their position, not merely by joining the Church, but through faith (1 John 5:1), righteousness (1 John 2:29), love (1 John 4:7), and overcoming the world. (1 John 5:4.)”²

Alma the Younger personally experienced the transformation from being an enemy to God to becoming a new creature, a being who was converted and, therefore, committed to building the kingdom:

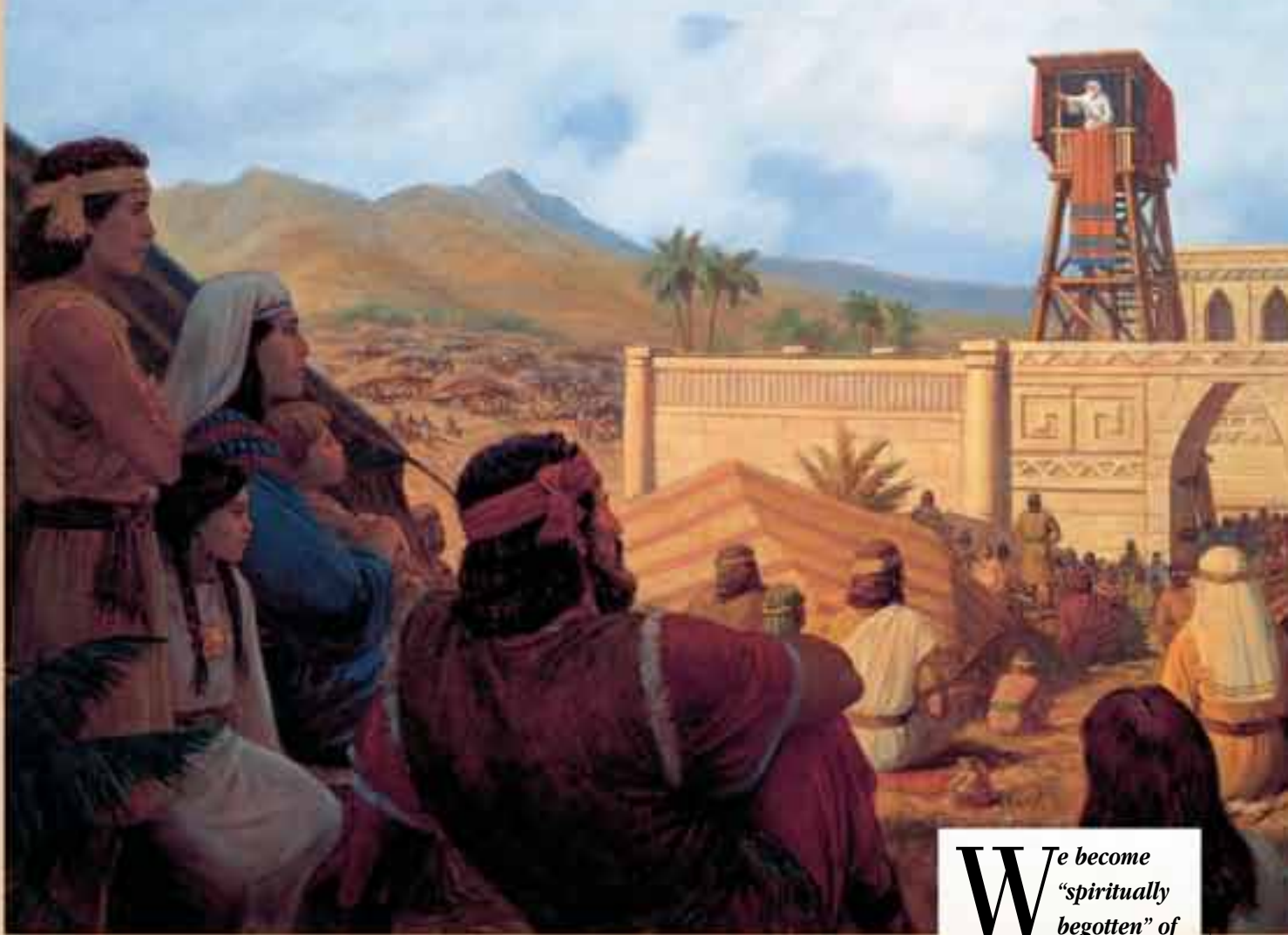
“For, said he, I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit.

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

“And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God” (Mosiah 27:24–26; emphasis added).

If *all* people must be born again and have a change of heart, it matters not if we were born into the Church or were converted later as youth or adults. We all must at some point experience that change of heart and that rebirth of the Spirit as we continue in the process of conversion. The process of rebirth and change of heart is intended to be comprehensive, available to *all* nations, and, hence, each individual.

The scriptures offer accounts of people who were born again in a remarkable manner, such as Paul (see Acts 9:1–20) and Alma the Younger (see Mosiah 27:8–37). However, for most people in biblical and Book of Mormon times, as well as today, this change of heart is not a singular event



but rather a private and gradual process.

Elder McConkie, speaking at a Brigham Young University First Stake conference, offered these comforting and encouraging words: “With most people, conversion [spiritual rebirth and accompanying remission of sins] is a process; and it goes step by step, degree by degree, level by level, from a lower state to a higher, from grace to grace, until the time that the individual is wholly turned to the cause of righteousness. Now, this means that an individual overcomes one sin today and another sin tomorrow. He perfects his life in one field now, and in another field later on. And the conversion process goes on until it is completed, until we become, literally, as the Book of Mormon says, saints of God instead of natural men.”³

It matters not whether our spiritual rebirth is sudden or, as is more common,

gradual. While the process may be different, the results will be similar. There is no difference in the quality of the conversion. For each individual, experiencing a mighty change of heart is manifested by feelings of joy and love, both of which eliminate the prior pain of disobedience (see Alma 36:20–21). How kind is our Heavenly Father! How encompassing is His Son’s Atonement!

With adherence to these true doctrines, like the missionary in Eastern Europe and his investigator, you and I may become beneficiaries of a mighty change of heart and a spiritual rebirth, thereby reaping the promised blessings of peace, love, true joy, and a disposition to do good continually. ■

NOTES

1. *Deseret News*, May 2, 1860, 68.
2. *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 101; see also Joseph Smith Translation, 1 John 3:9.
3. *Be Ye Converted*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year (Feb. 11, 1968), 12.

We become
“spiritually
begotten” of
Christ, King Benjamin
taught, when our
“hearts are changed
through faith on his
name.”

The Exquisite Joy of Repentance

BY PEGGY OLLERTON ARCHULETA

I thought I'd find happiness in living life the way I wanted, but I discovered that peace comes only through the Savior.

Many years ago I let go of the iron rod and wandered into the mists of darkness. I thought I had finally reached a state of long-overdue happiness, but as it turned out, my choices were hurting me and devastating others around me. During that time my parents and four sisters, who were all active in the Church, continued to hold to the iron rod, gently beckoning to me with open arms and loving voices. For 15 long years they never gave up.

Eventually I became consumed with shame and sadness. I had grown tired of my lifestyle, and I remember thinking that I wanted to be able to live my life in the sunshine with nothing to hide. However, returning to church was not something I was considering; I didn't think I needed the gospel to be happy or to be spiritually healthy. Instead, I turned to self-help books.

Nothing I read quite did the trick, however. Hoping to find something that could help fill the void I felt so deeply in my life, I asked my youngest sister, Susan, if she knew of any "feel-good" movies. A few weeks later, on my birthday, I received a package from Susan and her husband, Samuel, containing a copy of the Book of Mormon, a hymnbook, and the *Children's Songbook*. The accompanying note said, "Some time ago, you said you wanted to go see a 'feel-good' movie. Well, there are a few movies like that, but we thought you might enjoy



ILLUSTRATIONS BY GREGG THORKEISON; PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVE STOKER



something you can carry around with you to help you feel good. . . . Here's to your having lots of 'feel-good' times!"

The love sent with that package was palpable, and their gesture touched my heart. Over the next several months, I returned to Church activity. The emptiness in my life began to be filled. As I obeyed the commandments—the commandment to pay tithing, in particular—faithfully and with a glad heart, I noticed the insights I once longed for came to me in a

way and at a rate I had never before experienced. I also read the Book of Mormon, and I've read it many times since. Susan and Samuel were right—with each new reading, I gain a greater understanding of my mission and calling here on earth. I feel good.

This is what I have learned from my experiences:

No one is immune from making poor choices. To be complacent with one's testimony is to invite trouble. Prior to my



THE PEACE OF REPENTANCE

"You can regain peace of conscience by repenting of personal transgressions that cause you internal turmoil. Then peace of mind can be secured by resolving the external pressures that cause you temporary anxiety, worry, and distress. Yet try as you might, you will not find enduring happiness until, through repentance, you satisfy personally broken law to restore peace to a troubled conscience."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Peace of Conscience and Peace of Mind," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 16.



How grateful I am to have learned that the best way to find solutions to problems and to safeguard my testimony is to be constant in scripture study and prayer.

period of inactivity in the Church, I went to my bishop with various seeming troubles. He always counseled me to read my scriptures and pray. I concluded that he gave me such counsel because he was not a professional and it was all he really had to offer. As a result, I never took his advice. How grateful I am to have learned that the best way to find solutions to problems and to safeguard my testimony is to be constant in scripture study and prayer.

We must constantly evaluate where we stand. I ask myself, “Do I feel the Spirit near today? If not, what do I

need to do to move forward and to have the Spirit with me?”

Our testimonies are not contingent on others.

The strength of my testimony does not depend on the kindness of the members of my ward or the warmth of my bishop. I am grateful to have returned

to activity among loving members, and I hope to always help make my ward a nurturing arena for others who are finding their way back home. But I have also determined that I will be faithful in my Church activity regardless of any perceived offenses I might feel in the future.

We can live the gospel thoughtfully and genuinely. Just before I returned to full Church activity, a woman from the ward called to ask if my husband still cleaned carpets, as she had a carpet that needed cleaning. During our conversation she expressed love and enthusiasm for the gospel, so I assumed she was a new member. I also suspected that her call was a pretense and that one of my sisters had somehow put her up to it. I asked her, rather rudely, “How long have you been a member of the Church?” She quickly answered, “More than 25 years!” The only response I could muster was a stunned, “Oh.”

I learned a great deal from that sister. I can live the gospel mundanely, or I can live it with passion. Many years ago I paid my tithing because I felt I had to. Now I realize I can pay it with a heart full of gratitude and with the excitement that comes from knowing that the funds will help build churches and temples. I can take the sacrament each week thoughtfully with renewed resolve to keep my baptismal covenants. I can sing the hymns with all my heart. I can search for and take advantage of missionary opportunities.

Happiness comes from living the gospel of Jesus Christ. This, perhaps, is the most important thing I have learned over the years. Joy never has and never will come from sin and selfishness. I am grateful for the knowledge that I can repent and begin anew. Most of all, I am grateful that, finally, I feel good! ■



In Search of Mary Dudley

BY JILL DUDLEY DYCHES

Some might call it coincidence, but I know the Spirit guided me.

Several years ago, when I traveled to Massachusetts to visit my sister-in-law and attend a family history conference in her stake, I found myself thinking about one of my ancestors, Mary Lougee Dudley. According to some old newspaper articles, her husband, who was a minister, murdered her on the way home from a prayer meeting in 1848. After the conference, I felt prompted to stay in New England a few more days to try to learn more about Mary Lougee and her husband, Enos Dudley.

I rented a car and headed for the Prescott Hill Cemetery in New Hampshire. After three hours of driving, I found myself winding along a dirt road in a dense forest. As I

neared the cemetery, I came to a chain barricade marked Road Closed. A tremendous growth of foliage covered the ground, and rocks of all sizes were strewn across the roadway, making me wonder if anyone had passed this way in 50 years. Disappointed, I turned the car around and slowly headed back. A man walking along his driveway told me that no one had driven down that little road in years, and he knew of no other way to get to the cemetery. I stopped at two separate gas stations to inquire about directions and was given the same response.

First, Inquire of the Lord

I had a map. I had a GPS tracking system. But they weren't enough. So I did what I should have done an hour earlier: I stopped the car and asked Heavenly Father to help me find my way.

A few minutes later I pulled alongside a man and woman walking down the road. "I'm lost," I told them.



Their response made me realize that my prayers had been heard.

They told me there were two Prescott Hill cemeteries, and the one I wanted was about 55 miles in another direction. The man instructed me to drive over a bridge and through a town so small he called it a hamlet. If I followed his directions carefully, he said, I would eventually arrive at the cemetery, which was on the left side of a narrow dirt road. In awe, I asked him how he could possibly know about this tiny cemetery in the middle of nowhere. His companion replied, “You could have looked the world over and never have found a better person to ask. He just retired last week from the park and road service, and he knows every ditch and bridge, every cemetery and road in the area.”

Feeling humbled and blessed, I drove to the small, unkempt cemetery on a remote, rundown road. I walked the entire plot. It didn’t take long; there were no more than 60 headstones. I learned new information about my ancestors, and I also learned that if I ask Heavenly Father for help, He will answer my prayers.

After I had taken numerous photographs and copied information from headstones, I felt impressed to drive to the town of Alton, New Hampshire, where the Dudley

family had lived. I found a hotel and planned the following day’s activities. I would ask the funeral home about old cemetery records, visit the two local cemeteries I had found on my map, and look at old records at the town hall.

More Answers to Prayers

As I followed a librarian through the doorway, I saw a box sitting on a table. When I opened it, the first name I saw was Enos George Dudley—my elusive ancestor.

In the morning I called the funeral home. The director told me that if I drove to the cemetery right away, I would find a caretaker there. I met the caretaker, who was responsible for both cemeteries I had planned to visit. I asked him if there were any Dudleys buried there. He looked in his little file and found a few Dudleys, but none of the first names sounded familiar to me. I was about to leave when he asked, “Maybe you would like to go to the Dudley cemetery?”

I turned toward him in surprise. “There is a Dudley cemetery?” He drew a map for me, and I determined to go there after I visited the town hall.

At the town hall a clerk brought out an old book with information about births, marriages, and deaths from the early 1700s. How wonderful that these records still existed—I could hold them in my hands and feel a bit of history! It was nice to see my ancestors’ names and even some of their signatures, but I found little information that was new to me.

I left the town hall and walked down the street to the Gilman Library, where I found some of the nicest people I have ever met. I described my ancestor Enos Dudley, who was accused of murdering his wife, Mary, in 1848. Did they have any historical accounts of this infamous event? The librarians had never heard of Enos Dudley, but they invited me to the archival room, a private area at the back of the library, to look through some of the books kept there. I felt like a child in a candy store.

As I followed two librarians through a doorway, I looked to my left and saw a box sitting on a table.

I asked what was in the box, and they said it contained some old papers that a former librarian had been working on.

To everyone's surprise, the box contained files marked Dudley.

As I opened it, the first name I saw was Enos George Dudley—my elusive fourth great-grandfather! The librarians were as excited as I was. They sat me at a large table and photocopied records for me as I searched through this box of valuable information. “My” project became “our” project. None of these women were members of the Church, but we became united in a cause.

Visiting the Dudley Cemetery

After leaving the library, I visited the tiny Dudley cemetery. The caretaker, who lived next door to the cemetery, said he would be glad to show me around. What a wonderful man. He stopped working in his garden and not only showed me the Dudley cemetery but also took me to a Dudley monument that was hidden by overgrowth in the yard of a neighbor. On the stone were names and dates I had not known before. Who, I wondered, even knows that this monument exists other than the neighbors?

As we walked back to his home, I asked him if he knew of any members of the Lougee family buried in the area. To my amazement, he did know of some gravestones in a cemetery a few minutes away.

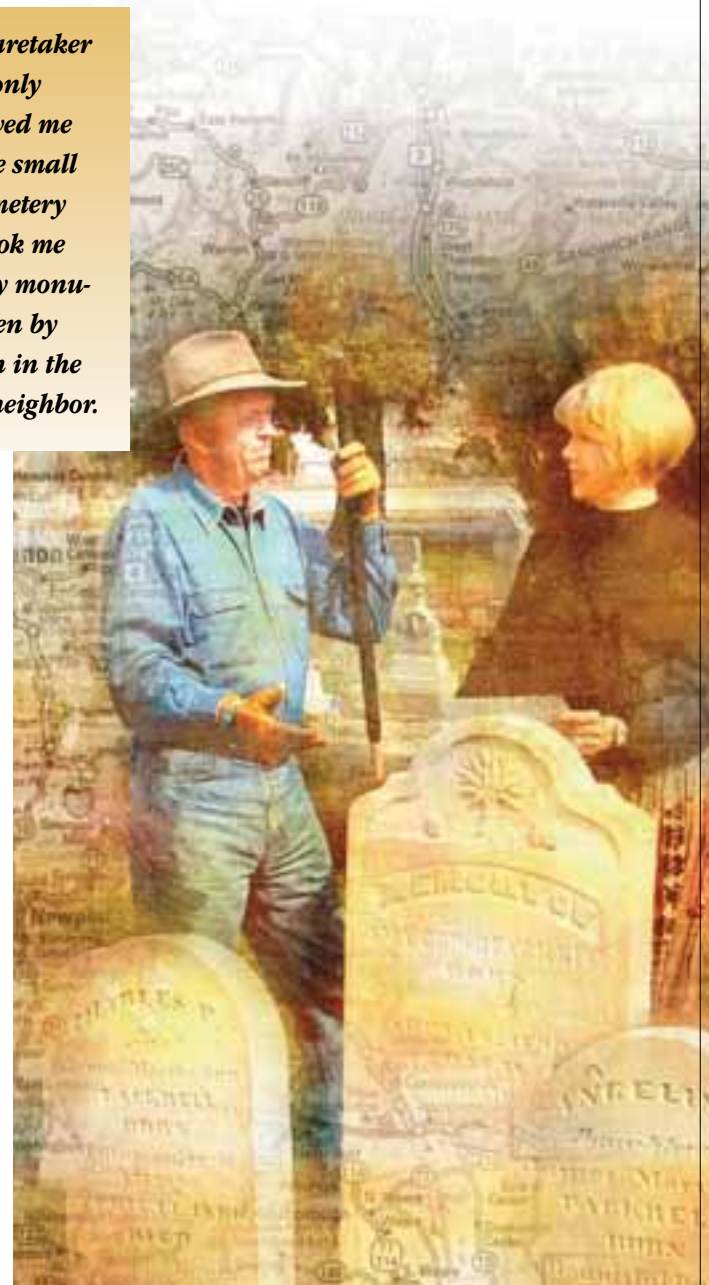
“How do you know this?” I ventured to ask. His humble reply was that he had retired a year earlier as caretaker of several large cemeteries in the area. He was kind enough to show me around the cemetery, where we found the Lougee gravestones. Later, he mentioned that I was very lucky to have found him at home. He informed me that he worked part-time at a local school and this was the first time he had ever left work early.

Lucky? I knew that luck had nothing to do with it. I had

been on the Lord's errand as I searched out my ancestors. He had guided me, through His Spirit, to everything I had found that day.

Was my ancestor Mary Lougee Dudley murdered by her husband, Enos? A jury decided she was. They convicted Enos of capital murder, and he was hanged at Haverhill Corner, New Hampshire, on May 23, 1859. ■

The caretaker not only showed me around the small Dudley cemetery but also took me to a Dudley monument hidden by overgrowth in the yard of a neighbor.



Presidents of the Young Women Organization through the Years

**YOUNG WOMEN PROGRAM ESTABLISHED NOVEMBER 28, 1869,
BY PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG FOR HIS DAUGHTERS**



"I desire [our girls] to retrench from their extravagance in dress, in eating and even in speech. The time has come when the sisters must agree . . . to set an example before the people of the world worthy of imitation. . . . I want you to set your own fashions . . . and set the style for all the rest of the world. . . .

I want my daughters to learn to work and to do it. . . . There is need for the young daughters of Israel to get a living testimony of the truth. . . . I wish our girls to obtain a knowledge of the Gospel for themselves. For this purpose I desire to establish . . . a Retrenchment Association, which I want you all to join, and I want you to vote to retrench in . . . everything that is bad and worthless, and improve in everything that is good and beautiful. Not to make yourselves unhappy, but to live so that you may be truly happy in this life and the life to come."

President Brigham Young (1801–77), quoted in Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association* (1911), 8–10.



**ELMINA
SHEPHERD
TAYLOR**

1880–1904

"The aim of the leaders of this movement has been to cultivate every gift and grace of true womanhood, recognizing the fact that it is not the outward appearance but the forces which gather within the soul that go to develop the individual."

(*Young Woman's Journal*, May 1891, 383)

Events

- 1889 – First issue of the monthly *Young Woman's Journal* is published.
- 1893 – Tuesday night is designated as Mutual night.
- 1898 – Traveling MIA libraries are begun.
- 1902 – Joint opening exercises are held for young men and young women.





MARTHA HORNE TINGEY

1904-29

"My heart is with the Mutual Improvement work. I love the youth of Zion, and I am anxious that . . . they may become a mighty army for righteousness in the kingdom of God."

(Quoted in Thomas C. Romney, "Martha Horne Tingey," Instructor, July 1950, 199)

Events

- 1912 – Liberty Stake holds first summer camp for girls.
- 1913 – First Churchwide speech and other contests are held during June conference.
- 1913 – Beehive girls program is organized.
- 1920 – YLMIA operates Beehive House as a home for girls.
- 1920 – Road shows sponsored by the MIA are written and performed.
- 1922 – Summer home for young women is built at Brighton in a canyon east of Salt Lake City.
- 1922 – Gold and green become the official colors of the MIA.
- 1922 – First gold and green ball is held.
- 1925 – Golden jubilee is held with YMMIA.



RUTH MAY FOX

1929-37

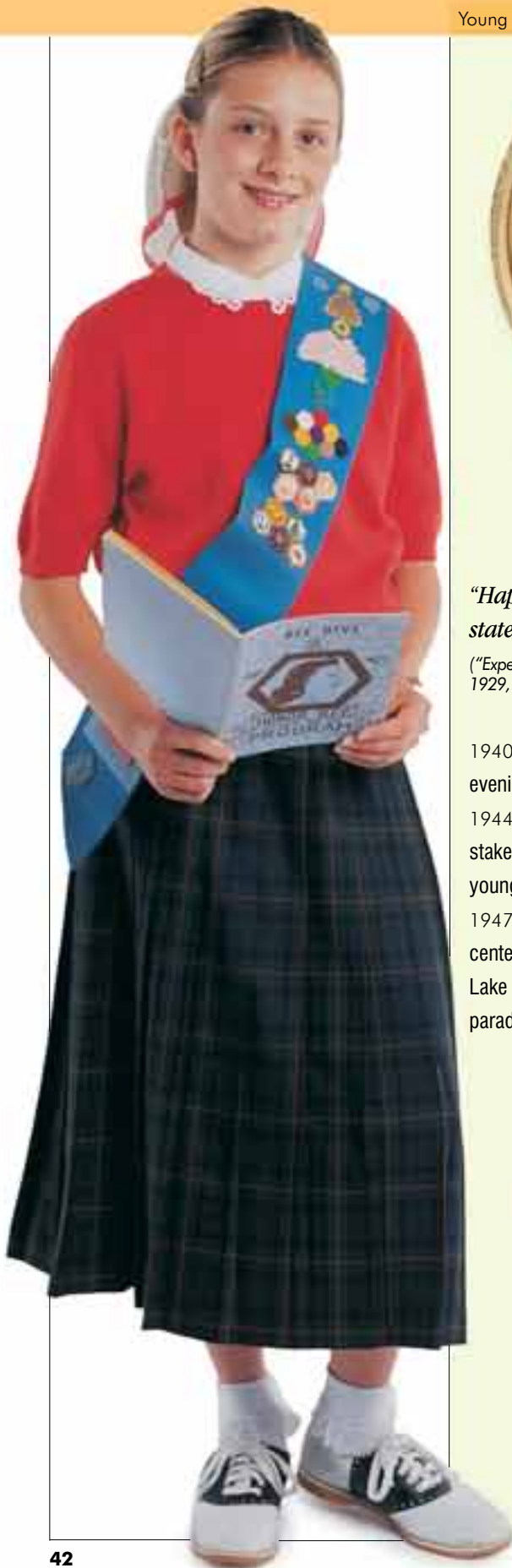
"Ever since I could understand, the gospel has meant everything to me. It has been my very breath, my mantle of protection against temptation, my consolation in sorrow, my joy and glory throughout all my days, and my hope of eternal life. 'The Kingdom of God or nothing' has been my motto."

(Quoted in Janet Peterson and LaRene Gaunt, Keepers of the Flame [1993], 49)

Events

- 1930 – The song "Carry On," written by Ruth May Fox for the Church's centennial, is sung by youth at June conference.
- 1931 – The Lion House becomes a social center for girls.
- 1935 – Scriptural themes replace slogans.
- 1936 – First MIA dance festival is held.





LUCY GRANT CANNON

1937-48

"Happiness comes from within; it is a state of mind."

(*"Experience,"* Young Woman's Journal, June 1929, 410)

Events

1940 – Golden Gleaner awards and Sunday evening firesides are introduced.

1944 – Big Sister program is initiated for stakes in large cities to provide support for young women living away from home.

1947 – YWMIA members celebrate the centennial of the pioneers entering the Salt Lake Valley through festivals, music, parades, and square dancing.



BERTHA STONE REEDER

1948-61

"Nature does indeed renew those who keep close to her. . . . If I were in my teens, I would take time to come close to nature. . . . I would realize again more fully the infinite variety in God's creation. I would learn to feel the difference in the seasons and to love each for what it gives to me. I would know that rain and sunshine are both important in God's plan."

(*"If I Were in My Teens,"* Improvement Era, June 1954, 470)

Events

1950 – Age groups are realigned:
Beehives 12-13,
Mia Maids 14-15,
Junior Gleaners 16-17,
Gleaners 18-24.

1950 – Speech and quartet festivals are held in local units and at June conference.

1950 – Individual Awards are introduced.

1950s – A series of posters is produced: "Be Honest with Yourself."

1959 – The name Gleaners is changed to Laurels.

1960 – Era of Youth section is inaugurated in the *Improvement Era*.





FLORENCE SMITH JACOBSEN

1961–72

“It is my prayer that we can be so dedicated that not one single girl in this great Church will be forgotten.”

(“Women, This Is Our Time,” Ensign, Mar. 1972, 39)

Events

1960s – Large Churchwide festivals are held annually.

1962 – Worldwide youth conferences are held.

1965 – *For the Strength of Youth* is published.

1967 – MIA begins annual presentation of *Promised Valley*.

1968 – The restored Beehive House and Lion House are opened to the public.

1969 – YWMIA celebrates its centennial.

1971 – The *New Era* is published for youth.



RUTH HARDY FUNK

1972–78

“I marvel as I look back at the divine orchestration of my life. I really do believe that the Lord customizes our experiences according to our needs.

... I feel the Lord expects us to go as far as we can with what he has given us. But I know that I cannot do what I need to do or must do until I finally come to him in total dependence.”

(Quoted in *Keepers of the Flame*, 117)

Events

1972 – YWMIA becomes an auxiliary to the priesthood.

1973 – Youth leadership and the bishop’s youth committee are emphasized.

1974 – “Behold Thy Handmaiden”: Six areas of focus and *My Personal Progress* are introduced.

1975 – Final June conference is held.

1978 – *Songs of the Heart*, a Young Women songbook, is published.



ELAINE ANDERSON CANNON

1978–84

“You can soar if you find out who you are and why you are here. There are two important days in a woman’s life: The day she is born and the day she finds out why.”

(“‘Let Me Soar,’ Women COUNSELED,” Church News, Oct. 17, 1981, 3)

Events

1978 – First general women’s meeting is held in the Tabernacle.

1980 – Sesquicentennial of the organization of the Church is celebrated. Young women are encouraged to make banners representing commitment or heritage.

1980 – Sunday instruction for young women is implemented with the consolidated meeting schedule.





ARDETH GREENE KAPP

1984–92

“I see the crest of a great wave forming . . . that will move across the earth, reaching every continent and every shore. I call upon you to stand with me to prepare to take your place in a great forward movement among the young women of the Church—a movement in which you are destined to shape history and participate in the fulfillment of prophecy.”

(“Stand Up, Lead Out,” New Era, Young Women Special Issue, Nov. 1985, 23)

Events

1984 – Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary offices are all housed in the Relief Society Building.

1985 – First Young Women satellite broadcast is held, introducing the Young Women values and theme.

1985 – A new *Personal Progress* book is published, and age-group mission statements, motto, and logo are introduced.

1986 – First Young Women worldwide celebration, “Rising Generation,” is observed.

1989 – Second Young Women worldwide celebration, “Stand for Truth and Righteousness,” is observed.



JANETTE CALLISTER HALES BECKHAM

1992–97

“I have tremendous reverence for each one of you. My hope for you during these important years between the ages of twelve and eighteen is that you are going from being a dependent child to becoming a righteous, problem-solving woman of faith. It is a mighty work you do during these years, and when you do your work well, you will build a foundation for a responsible and righteous life.”

(“Growing Up Spiritually,” Ensign, May 1994, 96)

Events

1992 – Third Young Women worldwide celebration, “Walk in the Light,” is observed.

1993 – New camp manual is introduced, focusing on service, spirituality, and the Young Women values.

1994 – 125th anniversary of the Young Women is observed.

1994 – First general Young Women meeting is held, separate from Relief Society.

1995 – Fourth Young Women worldwide celebration, “Experiment upon the Word,” is observed.



MARGARET DYRENG NADAULD

1997–2002

“Women of God can never be like women of the world. The world has enough women who are tough; we need women who are tender. There are enough women who are coarse; we need women who are kind. There are enough women who are rude; we need women who are refined. We have enough women of fame and fortune; we need more women of faith. We have enough greed; we need more goodness. We have enough vanity; we need more virtue. We have enough popularity; we need more purity.”

(“The Joy of Womanhood,” Ensign, Nov. 2000, 15)

Events

1998 – Fifth Young Women worldwide celebration, “Turning Hearts to the Family,” is observed.

2000 – Final Young Women worldwide celebration, “Stand as a Witness,” is held.

2002 – Young Women Personal Progress program is revised.

2002 – *For the Strength of Youth* is revised.

2002 – Annual Mutual theme is reinstated.

2002 – The words “strengthen home and family” are added to the Young Women theme.



SUSAN WINDER TANNER

2002–2008

“If young women know of God’s love for them, it will influence and shape all of their thoughts, feelings, and actions. They will understand they have a mission to perform in this life. They will have confidence in their ability to make responsible, righteous decisions. They will be able to resist temptation, to flee from worldly things, to dress modestly as is becoming of a divine daughter of God.”

(<http://www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,6821-1,00.html>, adapted from “How Will They Know Unless We Teach Them So?” open house address, Sept. 2003)

Events

2004 – Young Women section of the Church’s Web site LDS.org is launched.

2006 – Large youth cultural events, especially temple celebrations and celebrations of the Prophet Joseph Smith’s birthday, are re-established.

2007 – *Young Women Camp: A Guide for Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* is published.

2004–7 – Many large Church camping properties are developed.



ELAINE SCHWARTZ DALTON

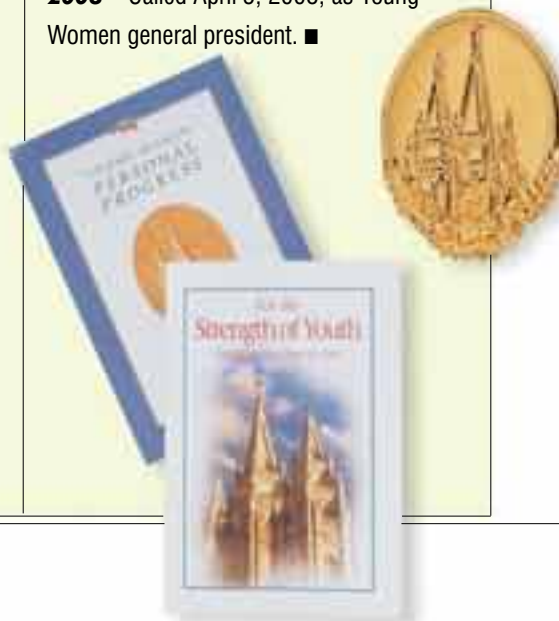
2008–

“Remember who you are. There is power and strength and freedom and joy in living a virtuous life. You are a daughter of God, and you have a unique mission to perform on this earth. Gain a testimony of Jesus Christ and allow Him to guide you through your life. You are a generation of destiny. You are the youth of the noble birthright. You have a great work to do.”

(<http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/news-releases-stories/new-young-women-leaders-see-bright-future>, adapted from press conference, Apr. 6, 2008)

Events

2008 – Called April 5, 2008, as Young Women general president. ■





The Spiritual Component of Healing

BY ELDER ALEXANDER B. MORRISON

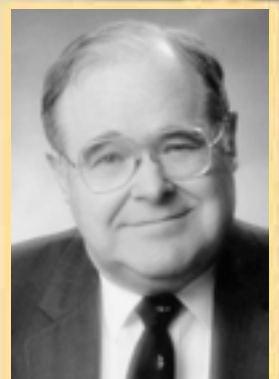
Served as a member of the Seventy from 1987 to 2000

The scriptural accounts of Jesus's life and teachings are replete with references to His unparalleled power to heal all manner of afflictions. The Gospels record more than 20 occasions when Jesus healed the sick: from healing the nobleman's son at Capernaum (see

John 4:46–53) to restoring the severed ear of Malchus, servant of the high priest (see Luke 22:50–51; John 18:10).

Christ's curative powers extended beyond the healing of those with physical ailments to include “*all* manner of disease among the people” (Matthew 4:23; emphasis added; see also Mosiah 3:5; 3 Nephi 17:5–10). Jesus, in His infinite compassion, healed not only those with physical ailments but also others whose illnesses were mental or emotional.

These healings are an integral component of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. It is so powerful—so all encompassing in its scope and reach—that it not only pays the price for sin but also can heal every mortal affliction. He who went forth suffering pains and afflictions of every kind that He might know perfectly how to succor His people (see Alma 7:11–12), who bore the incomprehensible burden of the sins of all who belong to the family of Adam (see 2 Nephi 9:21), in like manner extends His healing power to all, regardless of the cause of their affliction. “With his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).



The divine gift of healing is tailored to the needs of its recipients by Him who knows them best because He loves them most.

POOL OF BETHESDA,
BY CARL HEINRICH BLOCH,
COURTESY OF THE BRIGHAM YOUNG
UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART

Faith on the part of the recipient is the great prerequisite of healing. Without faith, the miracle of healing cannot occur.

The Role of the Priesthood

The Savior, through His divine power, could heal all, but mortal men who exercise the authority of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood are subject to His will. Sometimes, because God's will is otherwise, they are not able to heal those to whom they minister. For example, the Apostle Paul "besought the Lord thrice" to remove the unidentified "thorn in the flesh" that tormented him (2 Corinthians 12:7–8). But the Lord declined to do so, explaining, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul understood better than many that tribulation and suffering are both necessary and inevitable parts of life.

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) understood the wisdom in the limitations

placed on the healing power of priesthood holders. He noted: "The power of the priesthood is limitless but God has wisely placed upon each of us certain limitations. . . .

I am grateful that even through the priesthood I cannot heal all the sick. I might heal people who should die. . . . I fear I would frustrate the purposes of God."¹

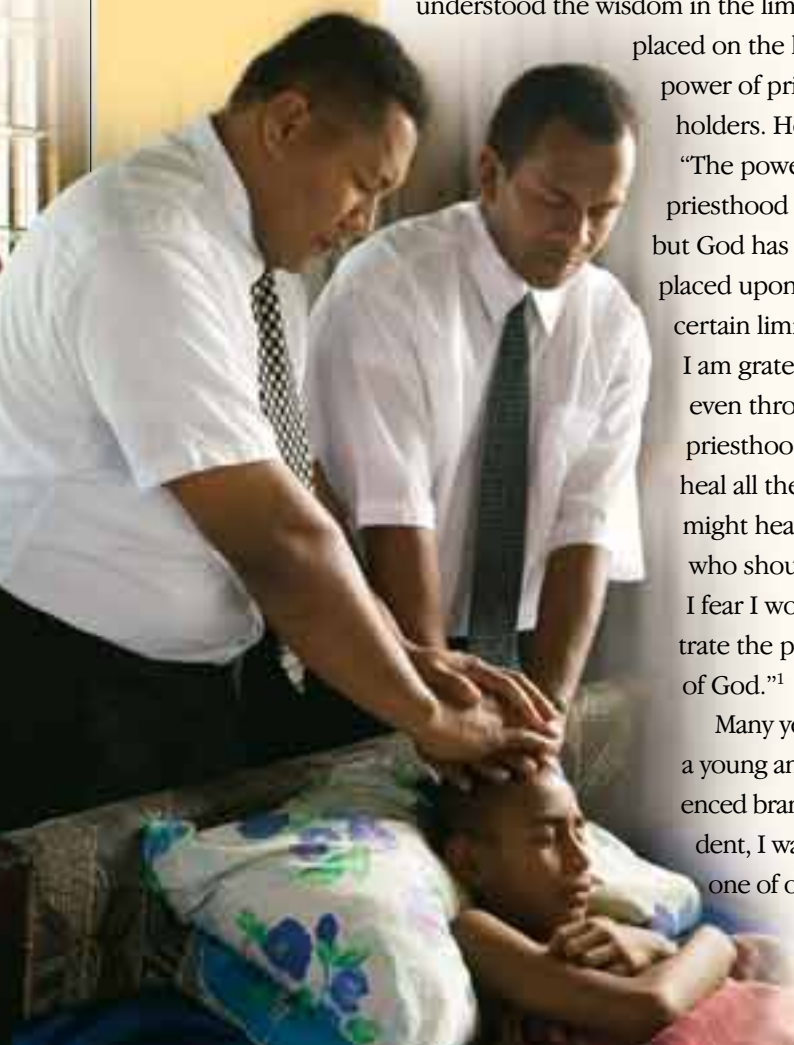
Many years ago, as a young and inexperienced branch president, I was asked by one of our branch

members to participate in the blessing of his grievously ill wife. The man obviously wanted me to bless her with complete recovery from her illness. That indeed was my intention; both the husband and wife were much-needed pillars in our struggling branch.

The husband anointed his wife's head with consecrated oil in the prescribed manner, and I proceeded to seal the anointing (see James 5:14). To my amazement, I found myself saying words I had not intended: the woman was "appointed unto death" (D&C 42:48). She would not recover from her illness but would slip away from us peacefully, cradled in the Savior's loving arms.

The woman died the next day, and I presided at her funeral, a sadder but wiser man. I had learned a great lesson: when we administer to the sick, our maxim must be "not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

The divine gift of healing is, therefore, manifested in different ways, tailored to the individual needs of those who are its recipients by Him who knows them best because He loves them most. Christ's healing power may provide permanent relief in the sense that abnormal functioning of one or more parts of the body is corrected and the heavy burden of suffering lifted from weary hearts. But the peace, rest, and relief of suffering so devoutly wished for by those whose burdens seem oftentimes unbearable may come not from healing in a medical sense but from the gift of added strength, understanding, patience, and compassion, which enable sufferers to carry their burdens. Like Alma and his brethren, they may then "bear up their burdens with ease" and "submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord" (Mosiah 24:15).





The Role of Medicine

We should not believe that all who suffer from illness, whatever the cause, need only receive a priesthood blessing to have their burdens lifted, perhaps permanently. I am a great advocate and supporter of priesthood blessings. I know from *many* personal experiences that Jesus Christ, and He alone, has ownership of the precious “balm in Gilead” (Jeremiah 8:22) needed for final and complete healing. But I know also that God has given us wonderful knowledge that can be of inestimable assistance in dealing with suffering. We must, I believe, take every advantage of such God-given information.

Some persons who are ill, who have received a priesthood blessing and have prayed fervently that their burdens might be lightened, may feel that they suffer from a lamentable lack of faith if they seek professional help for their affliction. They may even stop taking prescribed medication, thinking erroneously that their faith will replace the need for it. Such thinking is quite simply wrong. Receiving and acting upon professional advice and the concomitant exercise of faith are *not* in conflict. In fact, exercising faith may *require* following the advice of experienced health professionals.

Wise health professionals—whatever their academic training or orientation, be it primarily medical or psychological—increasingly are aware that spirituality is a significant component of their therapeutic resources. As recently as a decade ago only a handful of medical schools in the United States offered courses in spirituality and healing, but now more than half do. Particularly with religiously devout patients, evidence is beginning to show that spiritual

approaches to the psychotherapy of depression, for example, are at least as effective as those that are purely secular. A growing number of physicians and psychotherapists now use spiritually oriented approaches and interventions in treating patients with both physical and mental illnesses.

The Role of Faith

Faith on the part of the recipient is the great prerequisite of healing (see 2 Nephi 26:13; Mosiah 8:18; D&C 35:9). Faith—“the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1)—is a gift of the Spirit, bestowed as a reward for personal righteousness (see 1 Corinthians 12:9; D&C 46:19–20). Without faith, the miracle of healing cannot occur. “For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them; wherefore, he showed not himself until after their faith” (Ether 12:12).

Complete healing, which takes into account its spiritual component, also requires an understanding of our nature as God’s children and of our relationship to Him. The scriptures teach and modern prophets confirm that mortals are both body and spirit—the former corruptible, the latter eternal—and the two combined



The wondrous manifestations of Christ's love for all bring hope and encouragement to those who suffer from ailments of all sorts. His love is ever present and never failing.

are a living soul. The Father's great plan of happiness teaches us that body and spirit separated by the death that comes to all mortals will, in God's good time, be reunited, "and all men [will] become incorruptible, and immortal, and they [will become] living souls, having a perfect knowledge" (2 Nephi 9:13; see also Alma 11:42–45).

Faith in a loving Heavenly Father and in His Son, our Savior—coupled with the understanding that we are literally God's children, with a divine opportunity to strive to become as He is, and a realization that His love for us is eternal and unchangeable—brings peace to our lives. That peace persists even if the medical, psychological, or social dimensions of illness—be they physical or mental in origin—remain as "a thorn in the flesh."

The Role of Suffering

I believe our spiritual strength is directly related to the extent to which our souls are stretched. But we should neither seek for

suffering nor glory in tribulation. There is no intrinsic value in suffering in and of itself. Suffering can wound and embitter the soul as surely as it can strengthen and purify. Some souls become stronger in response to suffering, but others bend and break. As author Anne Morrow Lindbergh wisely noted, "If suffering alone taught, all the world would be wise, since everyone suffers."² If we are to partake of "the fellowship of [Christ's] sufferings" (Philippians 3:10), we must pay the price of striving with all our hearts to know and emulate Him. That price may indeed involve suffering, but to suffering we must add compassion, empathy, patience, humility, and a willingness to submit our will to that of God.

The wondrous manifestations of Christ's love for all bring hope and encouragement to those who suffer from ailments of all sorts. His love is ever present and never failing. As Paul testified:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . .

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35, 38–39).

Jesus, in His infinite love and compassion, knows of our trials and sorrows, for He "is mindful of every people, whatsoever land they may be in; yea, he numbereth his people, and his bowels of mercy are over all the earth" (Alma 26:37). ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 16.
2. "Lindbergh Nightmare," *Time*, Feb. 5, 1973, 35.



A CALL FROM THE HOSPITAL



NAME WITHHELD

Darren didn't know there was a bullet in the chamber until it went off.

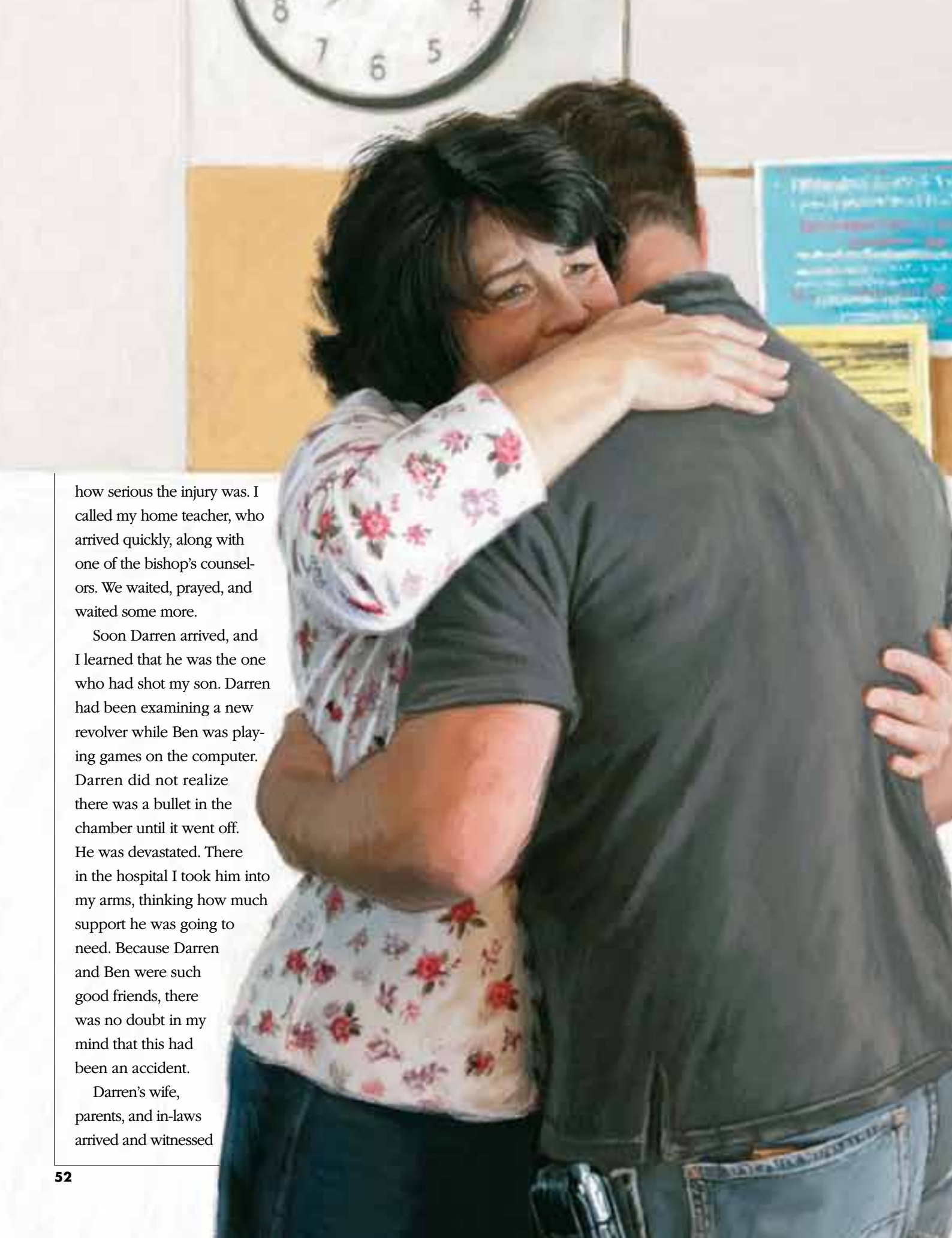
Ben was my youngest child and in many ways my most challenging. For several years he had followed the lures of the world, becoming involved with drugs and some very unsavory characters. Finally, after much rebellion, heartache, and pain, Ben began to turn his life around. He moved back home, began working a steady job, and started attending church and even paying tithing (although he didn't want me to know that). Many parents know the sorrow and pain their children's choices can cause, and many understand the joy that comes from every new, faltering step in the direction of the Lord. Ben was in this progression, sliding backward now and again, but slowly moving forward.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAN BURR

Darren, who was not a member of the Church, had been Ben's best friend for years. He had stood by Ben throughout most of Ben's rebellion, stepping back only when my son reached his lowest depths and pushed everyone away. But Darren was quick to be back at Ben's side as Ben began to change. After Darren returned from a tour of duty in Iraq, the two were together so much that sometimes Darren needed to be reminded that he was married and was needed at home.

Whispering Comfort

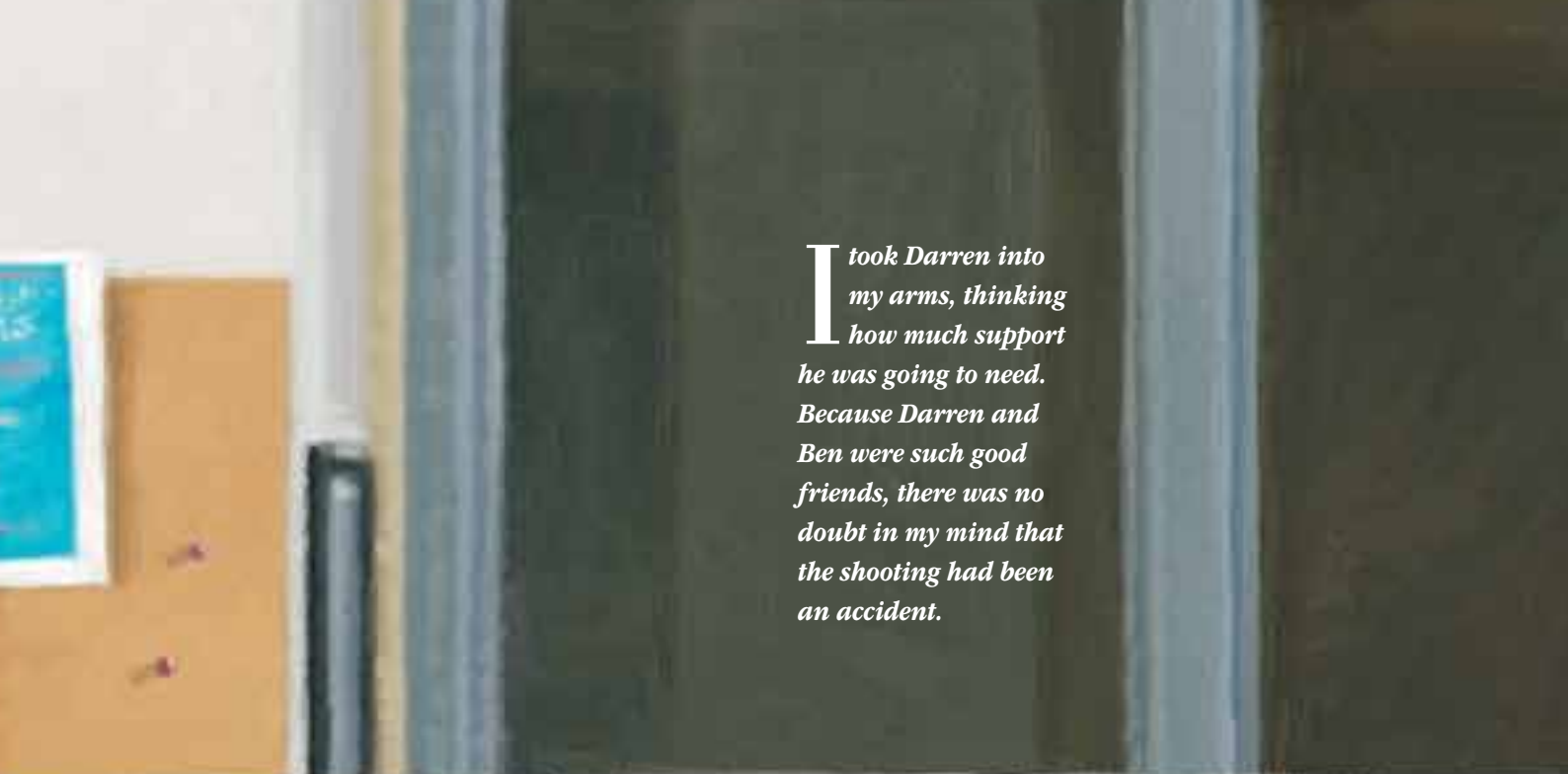
One Sunday after church, I received the call that parents pray they will never receive. It was from the hospital, saying that Ben had been admitted. They would not tell me what had happened over the phone; they said I just needed to get there as quickly as possible. At the hospital I was told that Ben had been shot and was in surgery. Only time would tell



how serious the injury was. I called my home teacher, who arrived quickly, along with one of the bishop's counselors. We waited, prayed, and waited some more.

Soon Darren arrived, and I learned that he was the one who had shot my son. Darren had been examining a new revolver while Ben was playing games on the computer. Darren did not realize there was a bullet in the chamber until it went off. He was devastated. There in the hospital I took him into my arms, thinking how much support he was going to need. Because Darren and Ben were such good friends, there was no doubt in my mind that this had been an accident.

Darren's wife, parents, and in-laws arrived and witnessed



I took Darren into my arms, thinking how much support he was going to need. Because Darren and Ben were such good friends, there was no doubt in my mind that the shooting had been an accident.

several priesthood blessings and heartfelt prayers for Ben and for Darren. When we joined Ben in the recovery room, I knew that his spirit was already gone. The staff gave me Ben's watch and CTR ring. I remember handing the ring to Darren across Ben's body, with a brief explanation of its meaning. Looking back, I now know that the Lord was whispering comfort, solace, and love into my heart. I was so aware of Darren's pain. I never felt a need to lay blame anywhere, despite the tremendous sadness and loss I was experiencing.

Finding Peace

After Ben's death I often wondered what I should do, how I should move forward. Again and again, I found myself counting my blessings. My personal support system, made up of my ward family and my work family, was awe-inspiring. I am so grateful for each friend who helped me through the darkest hours, who comforted and served me in so many ways. I found myself grateful that Ben had not been killed by any of his former drug associates. That was a good indication of the change of direction his life had taken. He was on the right path. And I found strength in knowing that I was in good standing with the Lord, an assurance I had sought for diligently in prayer over the past few years.

Darren's mother has told me that shortly after the accident Darren had said he felt he needed to go to my church, that he felt "there was something there." I told Darren that a few months before Ben's death my son had told me he wanted to talk to Darren about the gospel. Darren took the

missionary discussions. At the first meeting with the missionaries, Darren told the elders how afraid he had been to come to the hospital, how he had worried that I was going to hate him. In tears he said: "But she didn't. She just put her arms around me." I was surprised by Darren's comments. No other reaction had even occurred to me.

Less than a year after the accident, Darren was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church. I am grateful for Darren's friendship and the unique bond we share.

Bearing Testimony

How grateful I am for the Atonement and the great plan of happiness. My life would be unbearable without this knowledge. I know that the Savior's love is real. Alma taught:

"And he shall go forth, suffering pain and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

"And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:11–12).

I have felt the Lord's tender mercies again and again. I can testify to His loving-kindness and the power of forgiveness. I know that He lives and that I will be with my son again someday. ■

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

With all the difficulty in the world, I often find myself feeling anxious and worried. How can I find peace during troubled times?

A number of years ago some friends and I were driving home to Utah at night, after a vacation in Missouri. About an hour into my driving shift, a thick fog settled over the interstate. Visibility lessened to a mere few feet, and I began to panic. I turned to my friends for support only to realize they were asleep. The fog was so thick that I didn't know whether I could continue driving, but there seemed to be no safe place to pull over.

Then I received an impression to continue driving and to hold to the lane line. As I looked down, I noticed that the line was clearly illuminated by our car's headlights. By holding the car closely to the lane line I

was able to safely navigate my way through the thick fog.

In the Book of Mormon, Lehi described his vision of the multitudes who were seeking for the peace and joy of the tree of life. He said, "And they did press their way forward, continually holding fast to the rod of iron, until they came forth . . . and partook of the fruit of the tree" (1 Nephi 8:30). Nephi interpreted the rod of iron to be the word of God (see 1 Nephi 11:25). As I continually hold fast to the word of God, even in the midst of dark and troubled times, the assurance of glorious days ahead fills my soul with peace. Holding to the lane line brought peace to me

one foggy night on the interstate. Daily study of the word of God can bring peace to our souls wherever we are.

Scott A. Walker, Utah

When I start feeling overwhelmed by the conditions of the world, I realize it is time to take stock of my priorities and regain an eternal perspective. I review how my husband and I are managing the spirituality of our home by asking these questions:

One day as I was reflecting upon the challenges surrounding me, I noticed my scriptures on the table and felt an overpowering desire to read them. I knew that in them I would find truth.

Periodic feelings of anxiety are normal. As mentioned in this article, the gospel provides many important tools for dealing with these feelings. However, if anxiety is prolonged and interferes with daily functioning, it may be helpful to consult with one's ecclesiastical leader and possibly a therapist with LDS Family Services. To find an LDS Family Services office near you, or to seek more information, visit www.ldsfamilyservices.org or call 1-800-453-3860 ext. 21711.

- Are we having quality family home evenings each week?
- Are we having family prayer daily?
- Are we reading the scriptures as a family each day?
- Are we looking for opportunities to share the gospel?
- Are we attending the temple regularly?
- Are we being reverent and thoughtful during the sacrament and emphasizing the importance of our baptismal covenants?

Although these are basic things to do, I always feel reassured that when we are doing them, the Lord will be with us. I feel at peace when I know we are doing everything we can to draw close to the Savior as a family.
Hazel Wilsher, England

I enjoy following politics and current affairs but every once in a while find myself becoming concerned about what I see happening around the world. I sometimes feel as Nephi, the son of Helaman, and wish that I had lived in the days of my fathers when people were “easy to be entreated, firm to keep the commandments of God, and slow to be led to do iniquity” (Helaman 7:7). But, like Nephi, I also “am consigned that these are my days” (Helaman 7:9).

One day as I was reflecting upon the challenges surrounding me, I noticed my scriptures on the table and felt an overpowering desire to read them. I knew that in them I would find truth. They were not written with



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUKE

As we continually study and hold fast to the word of God, even in the midst of dark and troubled times, the assurance of glorious days ahead fills our souls with peace.

a political agenda, and they would not lie to me or distort the truth. I could trust them and follow them, and their contents would give me peace in this troubled world. Also, knowing that we have a prophet and other leaders who receive revelation to guide us comforts me and gives me peace. This knowledge allows me to let go of my fear and appreciate these exciting times.

Jacklyn Larsen, Texas

We certainly live in troubled times. The prophet Ether also lived in troubled times. His counsel can help us in our quest to find peace in this hectic world: “Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope

cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men” (Ether 12:4). True peace comes from being firmly anchored during a trying storm. We must be able to develop our faith and hope until we really believe that no matter what happens in this life, we can find the better world that Ether promises and we can have the peace that our Savior promised.

Real peace and comfort come from knowing that we are doing what the Lord expects us to do and fully relying on Him to give us the support we need.

Kason Andrew Twitchell, New Mexico

Whenever I am struck by the difficulties we face in the world and find myself worried, I recall the words

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINA SMITH

Stay anxiously engaged in good causes. If you want the world to be less difficult, be willing to offer a helping hand.

given to the Prophet Joseph in 1833: “Be still and *know* that I am God” (D&C 101:16; emphasis added). Our Heavenly Father is our God, and He is watching over us in all things. With my testimony of this truth as the foundation of my life, I cannot but follow this admonition to “be still.”

Jay McCarthy, Massachusetts

I have faith in Heavenly Father’s plan, and I know that all things are in His hands. But sometimes the suffering and wickedness in the world weigh on my mind and soul and I become discouraged. When this happened a few months ago, a scripture I found during my personal study took on new meaning.

Alma 31 tells of Alma and his brethren going to reclaim the

apostate Zoramites. When they arrived, they found conditions to be worse than they had supposed, for the people had fallen deep into iniquity. Before the missionaries began their efforts, Alma offered a prayer. He told the Lord about the wickedness of the Zoramites and asked for help. “O Lord, wilt thou give me strength, that I may bear with mine infirmities. For I am infirm, and such wickedness among this people doth pain my soul” (Alma 31:30).

This gave me a new perspective. If a prophet needed to ask God for the strength to bear the wickedness of the world, then I could find peace of mind in the same way. The best source of comfort always comes from our Heavenly Father.

Sometimes all we need to do is ask.
Gabrielle Cheney, Utah

One thing I have learned is that peace does not mean an absence of trouble, noise, or hard work. Peace is to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart. Priesthood blessings can bring that calm; faith, prayer, and scripture study will help maintain it.

Meghan Hinkson, Japan

I am a young father with four daughters under the age of eight. I used to worry about raising children in a wicked, violent world, but after the birth of my first daughter, that changed. A friend reminded me that the Lord is in charge and that faith in His protecting hand is our best defense. Since that time I have concentrated on teaching our daughters about the Savior and looking with excitement to His Second Coming.

Looking into the eyes of our girls, I see hope in the future. As we read in 2 Nephi 2:25, “Men are, that they might have joy.” My wife and I can teach our children to learn through their trials and to ultimately experience true joy (see D&C 122:5–8).

Lyndon Grunewald, Canada

The following ideas have helped me cope with difficulty in the world. They may also help you:

- Surround yourself with spiritually supportive friends.
- Live in a clean, orderly environment. If your home emanates peace, so will your life.
- Continually strive to live

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

righteously. The people in Lehi's vision might have let go of the iron rod when visibility was clear, because they could see where they were going. However, sudden mists of darkness would have been deadly (see 1 Nephi 8:23–24). By continually holding to the iron rod, even when seemingly unnecessary, we endure the difficult spells.

- Stay anxiously engaged in good causes (see D&C 58:27). How desolate this world would seem if you were unable to help someone smile or to say thank you. If you want the world to be less difficult, be willing to offer a helping hand.

- Get out of the world as frequently as possible. Attending the temple, accompanying the missionaries, attending Church functions, and fulfilling our callings help raise us to a holier sphere.

Perhaps we can't take the evil out of the world. We can, however, surround ourselves with "the peaceable things of the kingdom" (D&C 36:2; 39:6).

Peter Bontorno, New York

I am a convert of seven years. The reason I joined the Church was the peace I felt when I read the Book of Mormon. I continue to rely upon daily scripture study to bring peace and comfort into my life. The scriptures remind me that I'm not alone in this chaotic world. The Holy Ghost speaks peace, and I feel God's love when I read His words and strive to keep His commandments.

Vanessa Jackson, California

I looked outside the mission office window in Riga, Latvia, and noted with mild interest that it was snowing—again. My calm reaction surprised me. After all, I was raised in Las Vegas, Nevada. The coldest place I had ever lived was St. George, Utah, where my husband and I had retired six years earlier. I love sunshine, and I love heat. So why, I wondered, didn't the snow bother me? The answer came in a flash: I knew this was temporary. In another year, I'd be returning to my beloved desert. In the meantime, the snow and cold were merely an experience of our mission. After all our efforts to prepare for "facing the elements" after our call to the Baltic Mission, we would have been disappointed if we hadn't experienced at least some brutal weather.

In another flash I understood what the prophets have said about our time on earth. My mission in Latvia related to my regular life in the same way that this mortal life relates to the eternities: it is temporary, and everything we go through here is merely an experience of our mortal mission. Before we left our heavenly home, we had at least a general idea of the trials we would endure. When we return home, we'll be disappointed if we have missed any of that for which we had prepared. The Lord will never allow us to be tempted above what we can bear (see 1 Corinthians 10:13).

The insight I received that winter of my mission has instilled in me a peace and a serenity that I'd never



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUKE

Attending the temple helps raise us to a holier sphere.

before known was possible. Our Heavenly Father is in charge, and no matter what we face in this life, it will be OK. Righteousness will triumph, troubles will pass, and for all eternity we will appreciate the lessons we learned here. ■

Dana Tischer, Utah

SHARE YOUR IDEAS

An upcoming Q&A feature will focus on the following topic:

The best marriage advice I ever received was . . .

If you would like to share advice you received, please label your submission "marriage advice" and follow the guidelines under "Do You Have a Story to Tell?" in the contents pages at the beginning of the magazine. Please limit responses to 250 words and submit them by July 13.

Once heard a friend say he did not need to go to church to be a good person. He was satisfied that he was living a good life without church. He *was* a good person—as are many others I know who choose not to attend. But his statement festered in my mind for a long time. After all, I knew attending church *did* help me. Only later would I understand more clearly—through one of my hobbies—just how important Sabbath worship really is.

Those who know me know that I sew a lot. But every now and then I make a mistake and need to undo the stitching. To do this, I rely on a seam ripper, a sharp pointed instrument that unpicks stitches. Because I've used this tool many times, I have found faster ways of undoing stitches. Instead of ripping each individual stitch out of a seam, I can unpick one stitch every five to ten stitches. Then when I apply just the right amount of pressure, the whole seam rips apart.

On pondering this method of removing seams, I began to see how this process parallels life. The stitches that hold our lives together are the little things we do each day; they are the commandments we strive to keep all the time, like going to church, paying tithing, and saying family prayers. Satan doesn't have to tempt us to disobey all of the commandments at once. He doesn't need to rip each stitch out; he just has to unpick one of every five to ten stitches and apply the right amount of pressure. With these stitches missing and the strains of life pulling, it's hard to stay connected to the gospel.

Reinforcing Our Seams

BY JESSICA J. CARRIER

Every added stitch of obedience makes us stronger in a world that seems to be unraveling.

Of course we don't have to yield to these pressures. There is hope. When I want to reinforce a seam, I sew over it more than once. This ensures that if pressure is applied, the seam will stay intact.

Likewise, when we keep the commandments over and over again, we are reinforcing our seams. When the inevitable pressures of life pull as hard as they can, we—and our testimonies—remain intact.

It's true that active members of the Church don't have a monopoly on good qualities, but attending church is one of the many commandments

that reinforce us and help us fight the pressures of this world. It strengthens us in righteousness, brings us closer to the Savior, and makes us better prepared to serve Him. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE KROPP



Cultivating Sensitivity to Others

Becoming more aware of the unique challenges of those around us makes us better neighbors, friends, and Saints.

BY ANDREA WORTHINGTON SNARR

One sunny day I walked to my mailbox to retrieve the mail. Among the bills, I saw an envelope with my name typed on it. Excited to receive a letter, I quickly opened it. Then my hopes were shattered as I realized that someone had sent me an anonymous letter containing parenting tips. Photocopied articles explained how to say no to children and outlined the social ills resulting from parents' failures.

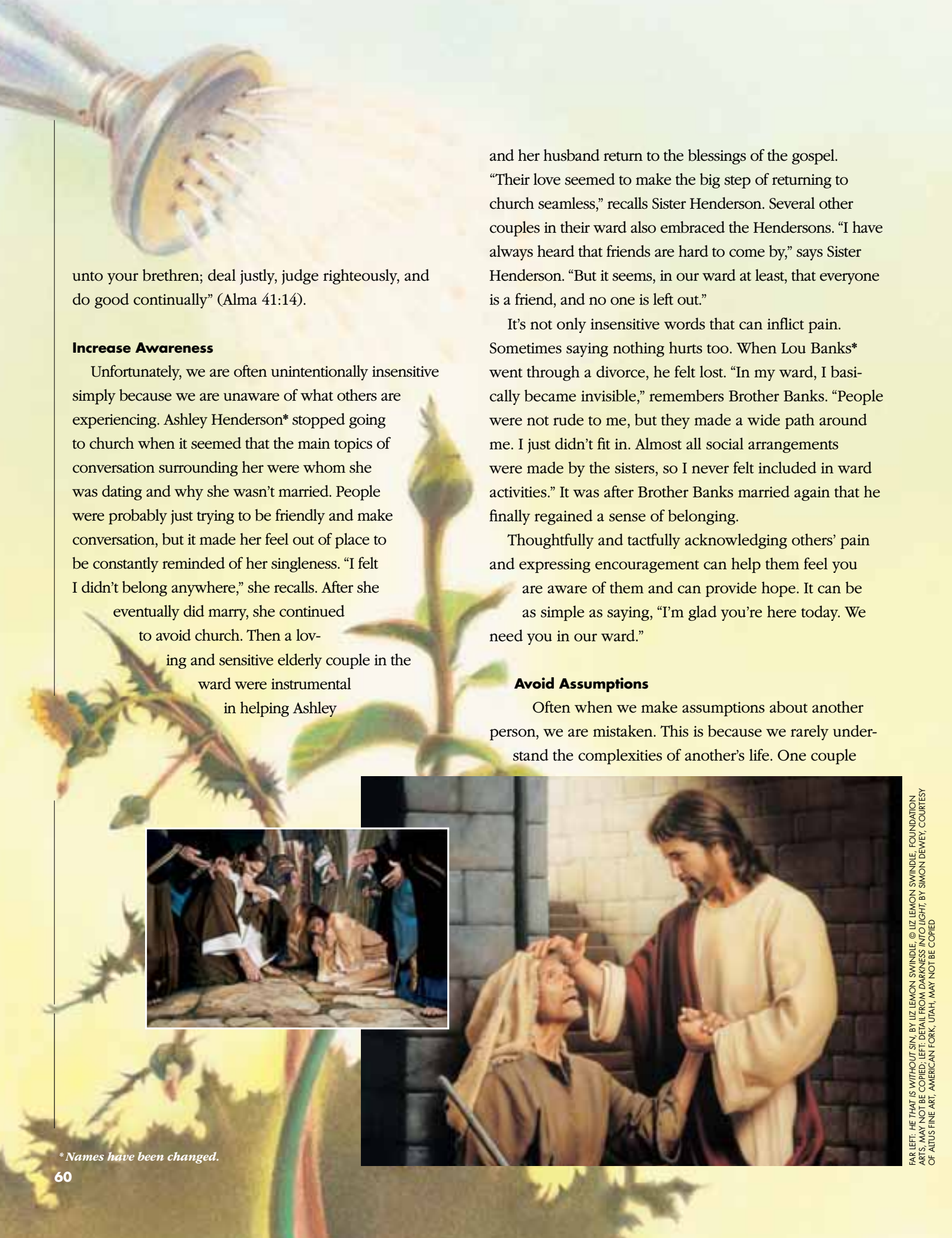
Obviously, the sender had noticed our son's difficulties. What the sender apparently did not know, however, is that our son has a neurological condition related to autism. Our efforts to help this son had been extremely time-consuming and expensive—including therapy, doctors, medications, parenting classes, alternative schooling, research, conferences, and consistent routines. If only the sender had known how hard we were trying.

I hurried inside to have a good cry. Fortunately, I had a friend I could call on for support.

She reassured me with kind words. Still, after that I found myself looking around, wondering who was judging me. Years after that regrettable incident, I harbor no malice for the letter's author, who simply didn't understand our situation. But the letter taught me that loving others includes striving to understand and be sensitive to their unique situations. All of us are individuals with varied life experiences. Some of us marry in this life; others remain single. Some have many children; others have none or few. Some endure divorce. Some pray daily for wayward children. Some struggle with chronic illness or disabilities.

Alma's counsel to his son Corianton can guide us in our efforts to become more sensitive: "See that you are merciful





unto your brethren; deal justly, judge righteously, and do good continually” (Alma 41:14).

Increase Awareness

Unfortunately, we are often unintentionally insensitive simply because we are unaware of what others are experiencing. Ashley Henderson* stopped going to church when it seemed that the main topics of conversation surrounding her were whom she was dating and why she wasn’t married. People were probably just trying to be friendly and make conversation, but it made her feel out of place to be constantly reminded of her singleness. “I felt I didn’t belong anywhere,” she recalls. After she eventually did marry, she continued to avoid church. Then a loving and sensitive elderly couple in the ward were instrumental in helping Ashley

and her husband return to the blessings of the gospel. “Their love seemed to make the big step of returning to church seamless,” recalls Sister Henderson. Several other couples in their ward also embraced the Hendersons. “I have always heard that friends are hard to come by,” says Sister Henderson. “But it seems, in our ward at least, that everyone is a friend, and no one is left out.”

It’s not only insensitive words that can inflict pain. Sometimes saying nothing hurts too. When Lou Banks* went through a divorce, he felt lost. “In my ward, I basically became invisible,” remembers Brother Banks. “People were not rude to me, but they made a wide path around me. I just didn’t fit in. Almost all social arrangements were made by the sisters, so I never felt included in ward activities.” It was after Brother Banks married again that he finally regained a sense of belonging.

Thoughtfully and tactfully acknowledging others’ pain and expressing encouragement can help them feel you are aware of them and can provide hope. It can be as simple as saying, “I’m glad you’re here today. We need you in our ward.”

Avoid Assumptions

Often when we make assumptions about another person, we are mistaken. This is because we rarely understand the complexities of another’s life. One couple



*Names have been changed.

who had been unable to have children received counsel from a member of their bishopric not to put off having a family in order to accumulate wealth and enjoy “a few of the good things in life.” The bishopric member didn’t know that the couple had been trying to have children for years and was now waiting to adopt a child.

David and Shauntel Hogan also recall hurtful comments when they experienced childlessness. Sister Hogan says that experience taught her that people are not intentionally insensitive—they just have limited experience and understanding. “It’s a matter of awareness. We all need to think about what we say to others because we all experience sensitive situations of some kind. I’ve learned never to assume anything. We need to take the time to get to know people. This cultivates understanding,” says Sister Hogan.

During their years of infertility challenges, the Hogans also received outpourings of love from family and friends. Just before an expensive medical procedure, they received an unexpected note containing not only moral support but financial assistance. That note is now a cherished keepsake. Eventually, the Hogans adopted three children. “We relied heavily on the experience and encouragement of friends and neighbors who preceded us on the adoption path,” relates Sister Hogan. “But others also took time to listen and express their confidence in us, even when they did not know exactly what we were experiencing. We had a cheering section enduring times

of uncertainty *with us*,” relates Sister Hogan. “We knew we were not alone.”

Extend Respect

Fortunately, our status—marital, financial, or social—does not define us as individuals. Nor should it determine the way we treat others. As Brother Terrance D. Olson noted: “Respect is an expression of our sense of universal brotherhood or sisterhood—a testimony of our membership in the human family. It acknowledges our common humanity and shows our reverence for children of God.”¹

The Lord is no respecter of persons (see D&C 1:35). He loves us all because we are all His children. When we see others in this light, we can’t help but love and try to understand them too. This is an effective way we can honor our baptismal covenants to “mourn with those that mourn . . . and comfort those that stand in need of comfort” (Mosiah 18:9).

Indeed, when Jesus walked the earth, He often associated with those whom others rejected. He loved the Samaritan woman at the well. He healed the lame, the blind, those afflicted with demons, and the lepers. And He made it clear that we should not assume that others’ afflictions are the result of their unrighteousness:

“And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

“And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

“Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him” (John 9:1–3).

The Lord is no respecter of persons. He loves us all because we are all His children. When we see others in this light, we can’t help but love and try to understand them too.

Show Kindness

Kindness and understanding should be at the heart of our relationships with others. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

“Kindness is a passport that opens doors and fashions friends. It softens hearts and molds relationships that can last lifetimes. . . .

“Kindness is the essence of a celestial life. Kindness is how a Christlike person treats others. Kindness should permeate all of our words and actions at work, at school, at church, and especially in our homes.”²

The Savior’s interaction with the woman taken in adultery is a perfect example of kindness and mercy. Hoping to catch Jesus in a trap, the Pharisees demanded to know whether the woman would be stoned for her unrighteous choices, according to the law of Moses. The Lord replied, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her” (John 8:7). Though He did not take her sin lightly, his actions spared her from stoning. He mercifully helped the woman understand that she was not hopelessly condemned and that she could change. Jesus also helped the self-righteous accusers, who were focusing on the woman’s sin without seeing their own.

One important way to show kindness is by refusing to gossip. Did you know that if you place several inchworms on the outside rim of a flowerpot, they will crawl around and around the rim until they starve? Even though food may be accessible a small distance away inside the pot, the worms will continue to mindlessly follow the worm ahead of them. So it is with gossip

and those who spread it. The tales go around and around, doing nobody any good.

Resist Taking Offense


Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has suggested that when people are “inconsiderate and tactless,” we can “choose not to be offended.”³ Developing our ability to resist being offended can be an insulating factor for all of us, including those who have significant challenges.

One morning I awoke to an icy scene outside my window. A wet snow had fallen and frozen during the cold hours. Little finches filled a tree where a bird feeder hung. The birds had fluffed out their feathers, making them look twice as large and protecting them from the harsh weather. It dawned on me that we can do this to protect ourselves when insensitive comments are carelessly flung toward us. We can warm ourselves with our own sure knowledge that God is mindful of us and that we are faithfully holding to His promises.

And we can increase our ability to love others. Everyone deals with something difficult. We all have weaknesses. Some deficits are more obvious than others, but everyone must overcome some obstacles. Why not help each other along, build each other up, and relieve each other’s burdens rather than make the journey even more difficult with criticism?

Do Good Continually

In one of my favorite books, *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, tending a garden brings healing to a sickly boy who once focused only on his negative situation



We can help plant roses in each other’s lives so that the thistles of life will not choke out the joy of God’s love—and His gospel. We can help each other along life’s path by being tactful and sensitive to others’ unique situations.



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. To help your children have more empathy for those with disabilities, try using one or more of the following object lessons: (1) Have family members do simple household chores with one arm; (2) Try explaining something by only using hand movements; (3) Construct a simple obstacle course for family members to go through with their eyes closed.

2. Share ideas from the article and talk about other times when it is important to be sensitive to others, such as welcoming a new ward member, being friendly to one whose spouse is not a member, or including single members.

and to a young girl who was once selfish and sour. A wise old gardener teaches a principle of gardening that can be applied to our attitude toward life: Where you tend a rose, a thistle cannot grow. Good deeds and good words can help us keep disappointments and difficulties from dominating our attitude.

I have been blessed with friends steeped in gospel living who have helped me keep the thistles at bay in my life's garden. One night our son's difficulties were thwarting our family's plans to go out to dinner for a daughter's birthday. Then, providentially, a friend appeared at our door, offering to stay with our son so we could celebrate the occasion. We knew we had experienced a tender mercy from the Lord, and we were grateful for a friend who followed the Savior's example of going about doing good.

We can help plant roses in each other's lives so that the thistles of life will not choke out the joy of God's love—and His gospel. We can help each other along life's path by being tactful and sensitive to others' unique situations. We can help others maintain their privacy and not gossip about their challenges. We can unify our wards and branches by supporting each other and cheering each other on instead of being accomplices to divisiveness. Then we will find ourselves enjoying more fully the blessings of living together in God's garden. ■

NOTES

1. "Cultivating Respect," *Ensign*, Oct. 2001, 48.
2. "The Virtue of Kindness," *Ensign*, May 2005, 26.
3. "And Nothing Shall Offend Them," *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 91.



Reaching Out TO BELONG

No one should feel lost in the crowd at church. Here are some tips for finding a place in your ward family.

BY REBECCA YOUNG

We all want to feel like a valued member of a loving ward family. While we don't go to church solely for its social aspects, attendance is much easier when we feel comfortable, accepted, and surrounded by friends. Unfortunately, there may be circumstances—such as being new in a ward, belonging to a ward with frequent turnover, or living in a ward that doesn't seem very social or welcoming—when we feel we don't belong.

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “We all belong to a community of Saints, we all need each other, and we are all working toward the same goal. Any one of us could isolate ourselves from this ward family on the basis of our differences. But we must not shut ourselves out or isolate ourselves from opportunities because of the differences we perceive in ourselves. Instead, let us share our gifts and talents with others, bringing brightness of hope and joy to them, and in so doing lift our own spirits.”¹

Following are some suggestions to help any of us feel more a part of our ward families.

Make a smooth transition. Before you leave your old ward, request that your records be sent to your new ward. Let your new bishop know you will be joining the ward and try to set up an appointment with him soon after you arrive so he can get to know you and your family. Ask him if you have any nearby neighbors who are members.

Know you're not alone. On our first Sunday in our new



ward, my husband and I stood up hesitantly after sacrament meeting, trying to find someone we could follow to the next meeting. While we were looking around, we saw another couple in the adjacent row doing the same thing. We smiled, approached them, and introduced ourselves. It was their first Sunday as well, so we searched for a Sunday School class together. That experience has continually reminded me that in new experiences I am probably not the only one feeling lost or alone. All of us have been new at one time or another.

Take the lead. Be the first to smile, say hello, or extend a hand. You might feel that others should reach out first, but as has been said, “To have a friend, first be a friend.” They may be waiting for someone to reach out to them too.

Participate in class. Not only does participating in class help you feel like a part of the ward, but it also helps others see who you are and learn your name, making it easier for them to reach out to you. Be sure to introduce yourself in class. Volunteer to read scriptures or say prayers. When appropriate, share a thought or personal experience. What you share may spark a conversation with someone later.

A large Sunday School class might feel overwhelming. It can be easier to get to know others in classes that





Participate in ward social activities.

Share your interests with others.



Be persistent in attending church and reaching out to others.



tend to be smaller, such as in Gospel Principles, Teacher Improvement, or Family History classes.

Get connected. When I have had callings that prevented me from hearing ward announcements, I have learned to seek out the information and pass it along to others who also might not have heard.

Home and visiting teaching also provide a connection to the ward. Be sure to do your own home or visiting teaching. If you don't have an assignment, let your quorum leaders or the Relief Society presidency know you would like one. Extend an invitation to your home and visiting teachers. Tell them when you will be available that month, schedule an appointment, and let them know you are looking forward to seeing them.

Attending activities in addition to Sunday meetings is another great way to get to know others. Home, family, and personal enrichment meetings; ward activities; ward and stake temple nights; and service projects all provide opportunities to associate with others. Prior to the activity, ask someone if they plan on attending. Then carpool or meet them at the activity.

Advertise your interests. When my mother moved into a new ward, she mentioned in Relief Society that she was looking for someone to join her on morning walks. A sister who lived nearby took the invitation, and they became fast friends. I know of two women in a ward who, while admiring a quilt at an enrichment meeting, discovered they both wanted to learn how to quilt and decided to learn together. Another sister traded babysitting services with others in her ward. This helped her get to know other families better, and she received affordable babysitting in return.

Help the missionaries. As ward mission leader, my husband had the chance to help fellowship new members and

investigators, even at a time when we were fairly new to a ward. We have found that inviting the missionaries and the people they teach into our home is a great way to feel like a part of a ward family, as is encouraging new or less-active members or investigators to come to activities and greeting them at church. We have met some of our closest friends by being involved in missionary work. Ask the missionaries to

introduce you to new members or investigators. As President Gordon B. Hinckley taught, every new member needs "a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with 'the good word of God.' (Moro. 6:4)."²

Keep your perspective. My father often reminded me that while the gospel is perfect, people aren't. Even though you may feel that a ward appears unwelcoming or seems to have set social groups, it is important to remember that first impressions are not always correct. We must be persistent in attending church and reaching out to others.

During the times we feel excluded, we can remember that during His earthly ministry, Christ was despised and rejected of men (see Isaiah 53:3). As He took upon Himself our sins and sorrows, He experienced every kind of pain and loneliness. We must rely on the Lord, seeking guidance through prayer and scripture study. As we do so, we can be guided and comforted by the Spirit.

As Paul reminds us, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

Each of us has a responsibility to strengthen the "household of God." As we strive to feel a part of our ward families by reaching out to others, no one need feel lost in the crowd. ■



THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SAINTS

"We speak of the fellowship of the Saints."

This is and must be a very real thing. We must never permit this spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood to weaken. We must constantly cultivate it."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "Fear Not to Do Good," Ensign, Jan. 2000, 2.

NOTES

1. "Belonging to a Ward Family," *Ensign*, Mar. 1996, 16.
2. "Converts and Young Men," *Ensign*, May 1997, 47.

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST TEACHES THE REALITY OF OUR PREMORTAL EXISTENCE



Teach the scriptures and statements that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Bear testimony of the doctrine. Invite those you teach to share what they have felt and learned.

What Are We Taught about the Premortal Existence?

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “We lived in the presence of God our Holy Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, in a premortal existence. . . . We were told:

“We will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

“And we will prove them here-with, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

“And they who keep their first estate [that is to be obedient in the premortal existence] shall be added upon; . . . and they who keep their second estate [that is, to be obedient during mortal life] shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever’ [Abraham 3:24–26]. . . .

“ . . . You were taught and prepared for the circumstances you would personally encounter in mortality. . . . Your memory of premortal life would

be kept from you to assure that it would be a valid test, but there would be guidance given to show you how to live. Our Father’s plan for salvation in this life with the opportunity of returning to Him would be called the gospel of Jesus Christ” (“Truth Restored,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 78–79).



Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “In a premortal council at which we were all present, [Jesus Christ] accepted our Father’s great plan of happiness for His children and was chosen by the Father to give effect to that plan. He led the forces of good against those of Satan and his followers in a battle for the souls of men that began before this world was formed. That conflict continues today. We were all on the side of Jesus then. We are on the side of Jesus today” (“Christians in Belief and Action,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 71).

Why Is It Essential to Understand the Premortal Existence?

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president: “Women have distinct assignments given to them from before the foundation of the world. . . . We know that in the great premortal conflict we sided with our Savior, Jesus Christ, to preserve our potential to belong to eternal families. We know we are daughters of God, and we know what we are to do. . . . We believe in the formation of eternal families. . . . We know that the commandment to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. . . . We have faith that with the Lord’s help we can be successful in rearing and teaching children. These are vital responsibilities in the plan of happiness, and when women embrace those roles with all their hearts, they are happy!” (“What Latter-day Saint Women Do Best: Stand Strong and Im-movable,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 110).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985): “If we looked at mortality as the whole of existence, then pain, sorrow, failure, and short life would be calamity. But if we look upon life as an eternal thing stretching far into the premortal past and on into the eternal post-death future, then all happenings may be put in proper perspective” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 15).

For additional study, see Jeremiah 1:4–5; D&C 138:55–56. ■



Fruits of the Book of Mormon

BY ELDER RICHARD G. HINCKLEY

Of the Seventy



Contemplating and applying the doctrines of Christ in the Book of Mormon have produced a “mighty change” in my heart.

When I read the Book of Mormon, something inevitably happens to me. My burdens feel lighter. Faith and hope replace my worries, concerns, and doubts. Life appears brighter.

As a young missionary in Germany, just a month or two in the field, I had two similar experiences that affected my testimony of the Book of Mormon in a profound way.

One morning as we were tracting, my companion and I knocked on the door of a minister of a prominent church. He invited us in, asked us to be seated at his table, and then immediately began to attack the Book of Mormon in a highly agitated and animated way. I understood most of what he was saying, and the contentious spirit in which he was saying it was unmistakable, but my lack of proficiency with the German language made it difficult for me to respond. My senior companion, a strong and outstanding missionary, simply bore a powerful testimony of the book, and we excused ourselves and left. My heart was pounding. I believe I was shaking a bit. I felt troubled.

A week or two later we met a man while street contacting who agreed to an appointment. We set a time, and he gave us his address in Bückeburg, a picturesque little

town several miles from our assigned city of Minden but still in our area.

It was winter, and on the Sunday morning of our appointment, we mounted our bicycles and pedaled the entire distance, bucking a strong, cold headwind. Cold and panting, we pressed the doorbell on the man’s apartment building, and he buzzed the door open. We climbed the stairs to his apartment, and he let us in. Immediately we recognized a contentious spirit in the room—the same spirit we had felt a few weeks earlier in the home of the minister.

Our host did not invite us to sit down. Instead, he left the room for a moment. He returned carrying several editions of the Bible, dropped them on the table, and said in a very loud and defiant voice, “So you want to talk [religion], do you?” Then, pointing to the window, he bellowed, “Good, but first throw your Book of Mormon in the Weser [River]!”

A couple of weeks had passed since our experience with the minister, and I was now able to say a sentence or two in German. I attempted to do so. Once again, my senior companion simply bore a strong, quiet testimony of the Book of Mormon and politely thanked the man for his time. Then we excused ourselves and rode back to Minden,

this time with the wind at our backs.

I had a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, or so I thought at the time. But it became painfully clear after those two experiences, so close together in time, that my testimony was neither deep nor strong. I was unsure of myself and of my ability to truthfully bear witness of the Book of Mormon in a powerful and convincing way.

I made up my mind that if I were to have a successful mission, I had better make sure my testimony of the Book of Mormon was true and strong. I went to work on it. I read and prayed and thought and contemplated. Ultimately, the Lord blessed my efforts. A testimony came to me and has never left; rather, it has grown stronger through the years.

I have thought often of those two experiences. I am grateful to a wise and steady companion, and in a way I am thankful for an unwitting minister and a rather fanatical man, who figuratively took hold of my shoulders and shook me. To this day, well beyond 40 years later, I remember their names and the details of our meetings. When I think of them, the great passage from 3 Nephi comes to mind:

“And according as I have commanded you thus shall ye baptize. And there shall be no disputations among you, as

I read and prayed
and thought and
contemplated.

**Ultimately, the Lord
blessed my efforts. A
testimony of the Book
of Mormon came to
me and has never
left; rather, it has
grown stronger
through the years.**

there have hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there have hitherto been.

“For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.

“Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away” (3 Nephi 11:28–30).

I think too of the great words of Paul to the Galatians: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Galatians 5:22–23).

These are the fruits I experience when I read the Book of Mormon. Reading its pages, contemplating the transcendent doctrines of Christ it contains, attempting to apply these in my life—all this settles in my mind and in my soul as a “mighty change” (Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:14) in my heart, one that gives me resolve to do better; to be a little kinder, less critical, more generous; and to share with others the great blessings the Lord has given me.

These are the fruits of the Spirit of God. These are the fruits of the Book of Mormon. ■



WHAT I LIKE BEST ABOUT CHURCH

By Isabelle Alpert

Recently my husband and I had dinner with some friends. The conversation turned to religion, and one friend, a less-active member of the Church, began telling me why the Church was not true.

In the course of his explanation, he became adamant, hostile, and angry. The entire time I sat and listened. At first I felt like crying, but then I became angry and wanted to tell him off. The still, small voice, however, told me to be quiet.

Our friend didn't finish his tirade until we had finished our dinner and paid the bill.

Then he paused,

as if waiting for my rebuttal. I sat there for a moment in silent prayer. Then, in a soft voice, I calmly said, "Do you know what I like best about going to church on Sunday? The sacrament. It allows me the opportunity to quietly bow my head and pray to Heavenly Father. I tell Him all the ways in which I could have done things differently during the past week, and I seek for ways to improve."

Then I added, "I think of all the people I tried to be a blessing to during the past week, and I ask Heavenly Father to help me find more people to bless during the coming week. I am thankful that I have time during the sacrament each week to do this and to become the best I can be."

Our friend looked at me and said nothing. We left the restaurant and walked to the car. I then asked him if he remembered all of the self-help books I had on my bookshelf at home. He did. I told him that since I had joined the Church, I had never read another self-help book. I said the only book I get my answers from anymore is the Book of Mormon.

A few days later he called to apologize.

"Come unto Christ . . . and love God with all your might,

I told our angry, less-active friend that what I like best about going to church is taking the sacrament.

mind and strength” (Moroni 10:32), Moroni counsels us. As I have tried to follow that counsel, my love for God’s children has increased—even for those who try to be my enemy. ■

A WEEK TO GO UNTIL PAYDAY

By Julie C. Donaldson

With some difficulty, my husband and I, carrying our two young children, found an empty table in the college’s large dining room. Pulling out the sandwiches we had made at home, we discussed our bleak financial situation.

We had no money and a week to go until our next paycheck. Neither of us wanted to ask our parents for help. We had credit cards, but if we started using them, how would we stop? We had been paying our tithing faithfully, and we hoped Heavenly Father would bless us.

As we considered our options, I noticed a man smiling at us from several tables away. With our noisy, active children, I was used to people staring at us. I gave his notice no thought until he walked toward us. Placing a folded piece of paper on the table, he patted my husband on the back and said with a smile, “It looks like you’ve got your hands full.”

Then he walked away and quickly

disappeared into the crowd. Unfolding the paper, we read, “Good luck! It looks like you’re doing a good job so far.” Tucked into the fold was enough money to get us through the next week and then some.

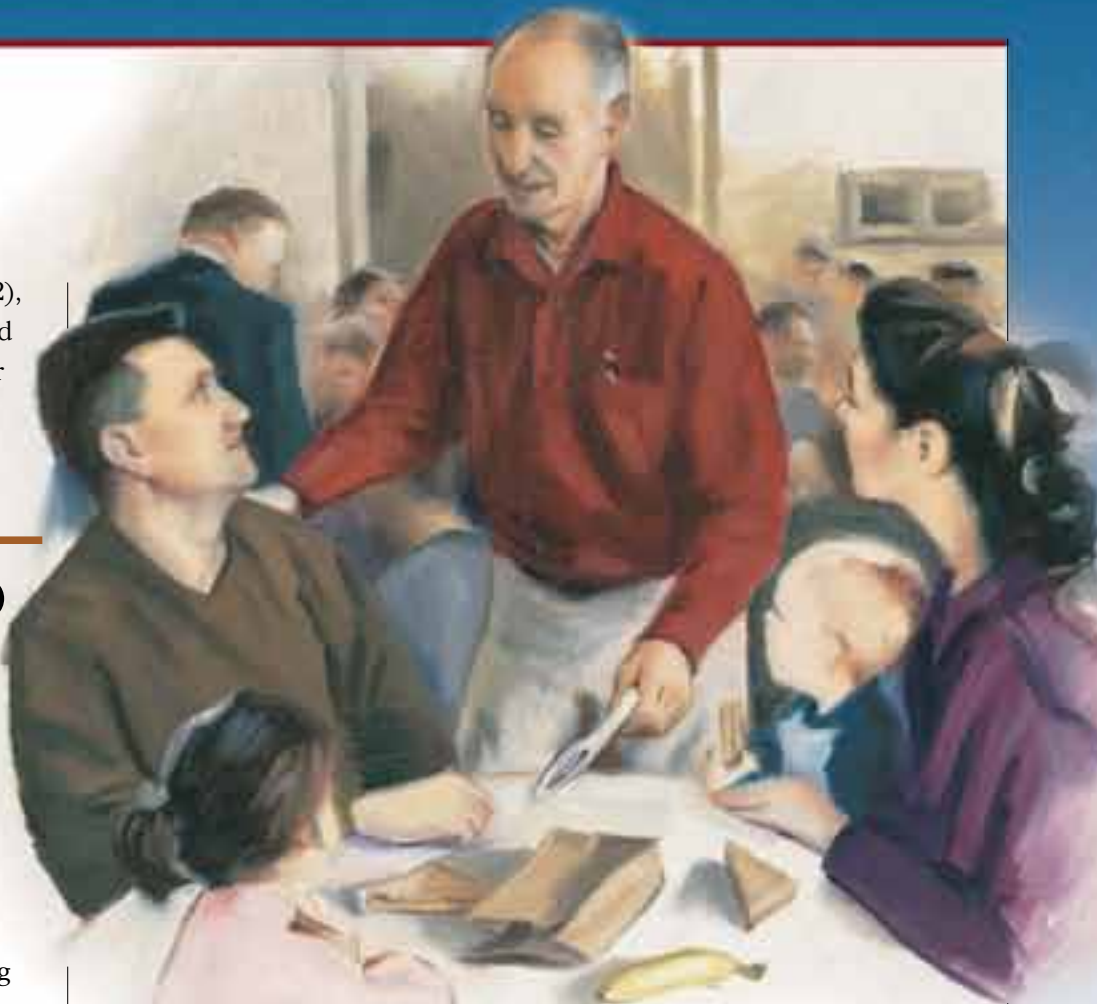
With tears in my eyes, I felt the Spirit’s peaceful assurance that this was an answer to our prayers and a blessing from paying our tithing. I knew at that moment that Heavenly Father was intimately aware of our little family and that He would not forsake us.


The stranger walked toward us, placed a folded piece of paper on the table, and patted my husband on the back.

I kept the note and have read it many times over the past few years. I am sure that the generous stranger did not fully comprehend the impact his action would have. But for

our family, this experience was a turning point—a turning toward greater obedience, faith, and gratitude.

A spiritual prompting, a generous stranger willing to act, and a helpful note have blessed my family eternally. ■



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a blue book with gold lettering on the cover. The book is titled "EL LIBRO DE MORMON". The hand is positioned over a sidewalk, and the lower legs and feet of two people are visible in the background. One person is wearing brown pants and dark brown shoes, while the other is wearing light-colored pants and brown shoes. The scene is set outdoors on a paved surface.

As Favio approached the book lying on the sidewalk, he recognized the golden letters. It was Heavenly Father's answer.

WHERE WOULD I FIND ANOTHER BOOK OF MORMON?

By Curtis Kleinman

My companion and I had just ended a long, unsuccessful day of knocking on doors in Buenos Aires, Argentina. As we sat waiting for the bus, I began to sink into a daze of self-pity. I'd served in the area for three months with no success. I felt that I had let the Lord down.

Just then I noticed a man in the distance hurrying toward us on a bicycle. He was yelling and waving. Hoping to avoid the seemingly angry man, we walked quickly toward our approaching bus. It was getting dark, and we were in a dangerous part of our area. We hoped to reach the bus before the frightening man reached us.

"I have a question for you," yelled the man. The bus arrived just before

he did, and we scrambled aboard. Then I heard the man's question: "What happened to the gold plates after Joseph Smith translated them?" My mouth fell open. I wanted to jump from the bus as it drove away. Instead I yelled, "Where do you live?" and hurriedly scribbled his address.

We stopped by the man's house the next day. His name was Favio. A month before, he told us, his friend had loaned him a copy of the Book of Mormon.

"I have always been interested in Jesus Christ, but I had never heard of another testament of His life," Favio said. "I knew only about the Bible and

Christ's ministry in the East. No one ever told me that Christ came to America! I was excited to learn more."

A few weeks later Favio had to return the book. "I didn't know where I would get another copy," he said. "I wanted more than anything to know if the book was true. I got down on my knees and asked for Heavenly Father's help. I said, 'Father, if the Book of Mormon is true, please let another copy fall into my hands so I can continue to study it.'"

One day Favio was at a train station. Out of the corner of his eye he saw what looked like a blue book lying on the sidewalk. As he approached it he recognized the golden letters. It was Heavenly Father's answer.

Weeks after he had found the Book of Mormon, Favio saw us at the bus stop. By then he knew the book was true. Over the next few weeks we taught Favio the basic principles of the

gospel and encouraged him to continue reading. Every time we asked him if he would commit to living a new gospel principle, he would answer, “I’m afraid not to.” Shortly thereafter, he entered the waters of baptism.

Now every time I have a difficult day, instead of sinking into self-pity, I remember Favio—his question for two discouraged missionaries and his commitment to the Lord after he received an answer. ■

taught at home and in Primary. They were only six and seven, but they had faith in the power of prayer. They knew that Heavenly Father was able to help their little sister.

I thought about their faith all afternoon. Then a question came to mind: when did I start to feel peaceful? After figuring out how long it took to reach the hospital, I realized that my peaceful feeling came at about the same time that Vanessa and Vasco had prayed.

I know that Heavenly Father heard those sweet voices and not only blessed my daughter with health but also blessed me with peace. I will never forget what I learned that day from my children: we have a loving Father who hears our prayers and wants to bless us “with a sweet and calm assurance that he cares” (“Be Thou Humble,” *Hymns*, no. 130). ■

MY CHILDREN’S PRAYER

By Virgínia Augusta de Pádua Lima Pereira

As I answered the phone at our chapel in Viseu, Portugal, I wondered who was calling. I was surprised to hear the trembling voice of my eight-year-old son on the line.

“Mom, Viviana was hit by a car,” he said. “She is alive, but her head is bleeding! She is going to the hospital.”

I almost fainted. What was I going to do? Fortunately, I had family nearby—two of my sisters were with me. One of them accompanied me to the hospital, while the other one went to watch and comfort my three distressed children at home.

In the middle of so much anguish, I wanted to pray but could only weep.

On the way to the hospital, however, I was suddenly overcome by a feeling of peace and assurance. I felt that I didn’t need to worry; everything would be all right.

My sister noticed the change and asked, “Are you OK?” I nodded. Skeptical, she asked again, “Really? Are you OK?”

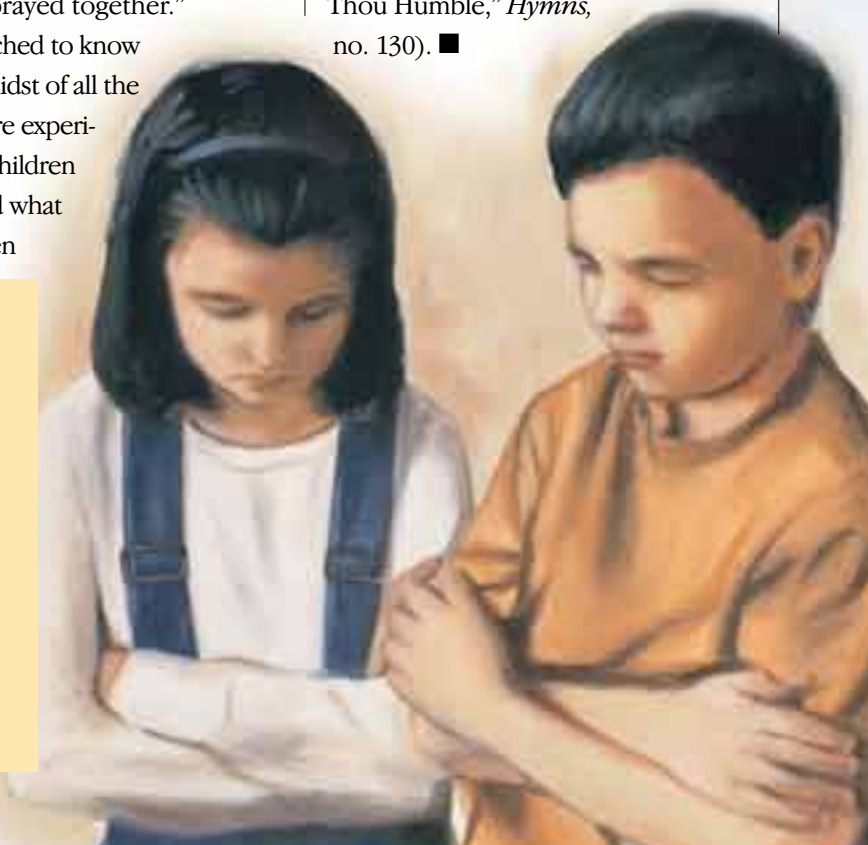
“Yes,” I replied, remaining silent for the rest of the journey.

When we arrived at the hospital, I found my four-year-old daughter conscious and only slightly hurt. After comforting her, I couldn’t stop thinking about the peace I had felt.

Viviana returned home after one day in the hospital. In talking about the accident, my sister who had stayed with the children said, “Yesterday, after the ambulance left, Vanessa and Vasco went into the house and prayed together.”

I was touched to know that in the midst of all the fear they were experiencing, my children remembered what they had been

In the midst of all the fear they were experiencing, my children remembered what they had been taught.



ROOMMATE REMINDERS

When I moved away from home, I never knew how much I could learn to love new roommates. But those relationships have also helped me prepare for life in general. While extenuating circumstances may occur, principles for happy living can apply to most roommate relationships.

- **Laugh.** Realize that you all have differences and learn to find humor in each other's quirks. Some of my roommates have been night owls; others were early birds. I've lived with all kinds of music from the Beatles to opera.

Regardless of our backgrounds, we can all laugh together and forgive one another instead of taking things too seriously.

- **Be considerate.** Follow through on roommate commitments, and understand when someone is feeling overwhelmed. Even a simple thing like being quiet for a light sleeper can show you care.

- **Communicate.** Make time to discuss apartment concerns together. Acknowledge the good others have done and listen receptively to everyone's suggestions. Communicate regularly so concerns don't fester.

- **Let go.** Some things don't matter, and no one roommate is the boss. Consider carefully how you can compromise in certain areas without compromising your personal standards.

- **Love them anyway.** You may not end up as best friends, but you can still try to see your roommates as the Savior does. Serve them as He would. Saying nice things or making someone's bed can really work wonders. Simply stated, treat others as you would like to be treated.

Katie Westenskow, Oregon

THEY CAN SEE WHAT TO DO

In our family we believe everyone is responsible to help our household run smoothly. Before our daughters could read, I made a simple "to-do" poster using pictures instead of instructions. I took pictures of the girls doing household chores such as making their beds, putting

away laundry, and setting

the table. I laminated

the pictures; you

could also use

contact paper or

cover them with

clear tape. Then I

wrote "To Do" on the

left side of a poster

board and "Done"

on the right side

before laminating

it as well. I adhered

Velcro to the backs of

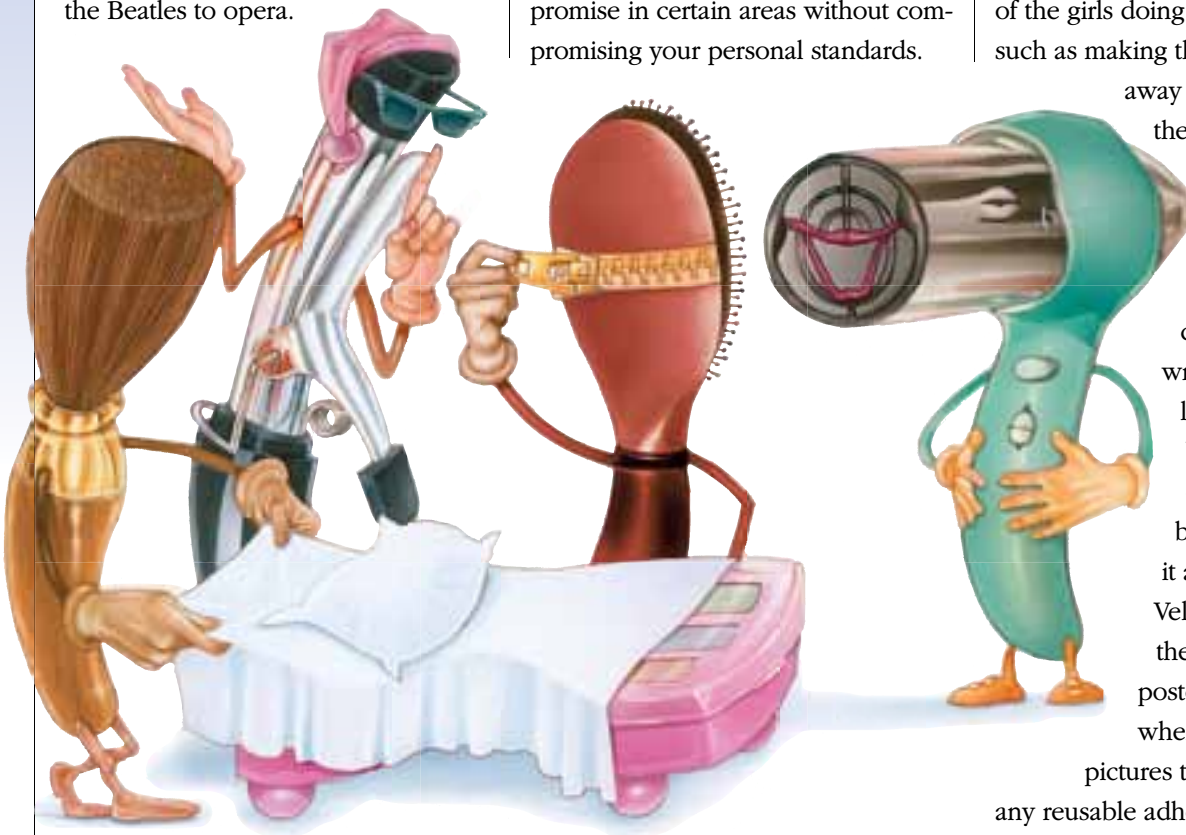
the pictures and on the

poster in two columns

where I wanted the

pictures to be. Of course,

any reusable adhesive would work



well too. Then the girls could move each picture to the right side as they completed the responsibility. Though they're both good readers now, our daughters still love to use their own personalized to-do charts.

Jenny Spencer, California

BOOKMARKS FOR SCRIPTURE STUDY

Enhance your scripture study with a bookmark? Of course you can. Seminary students do it every year, so why not use this resource at home or in Sunday classes? Bookmarks for each of the standard works are available online at www.ldsces.org. They include a chronology of events as well as a scripture mastery list.

On this Web site, you can also learn about the Church's seminary program. Additional study aids, such as reading charts, manuals, and study guides, are available. You can even download MP3 files to create your own CDs, to store on portable devices, or to save on your computer hard drive.

Studying the chronological time lines has provided me with a better base understanding of scriptural events. Because the bookmarks have been so helpful to me, I often share them with other members or when I teach a lesson.

Michelle Erik Lehnardt, Utah

FAMILY HOME EVENING HELPS



Military Mail

My husband, Paul, is gone for months at a time serving in the military, so we often have to work harder to keep our family connected. At least once a month I send a package, and we often send letters, sometimes daily, in addition to regular e-mails. We like to liven up our correspondence, as you'll see from some of our favorite ideas.

• **Audiovisual recordings.** Sometimes I record our daughters doing a play, dance, or talent show. Other times I ask Paul to record his thoughts on a particular subject. Then I play his comments at the end of our family home evening lesson or activity. I have to plan ahead for this because, in our case, mail delivery takes at least three weeks.

• **Pictures.**

Every other month we take creative pictures of us. Once we used a photo booth at a store to machine-draw our

pictures. We also posed for a western-style photo. I take lots of everyday photos, which we organize in a scrapbook and send to Paul. Sometimes we put little comment stickers on the pictures or write about silly things we were thinking when the pictures were taken.

• **Date coupons.**

Before Paul leaves for duty, he likes to take our daughters out separately for a special date night of their choice. After he left, I implemented a similar idea and gave the girls 12 coupons each (written on small note cards), one for each month their dad would be gone. Each coupon was good for a date night with Mom. After we were done with an activity, each child would write about our date on the back of the coupon and send it to Dad. He loved receiving the cards and

knew we were doing well while he was away.

• **Parties.** For special occasions it's fun to prepare a "party package." Before Paul's birthday we had a party on his behalf with family and friends. We filmed the whole thing, talking to the camera as if we were talking to him. We sang a birthday song, and the tape ended when we told him to open his presents. Then we put the video, decorations from the party, treats, and presents in the package, which he received by his actual birthday.

All of these suggestions require a little planning, but I've found it's good to keep busy while my husband is away. Though distance separates us, Paul does what he can to keep in touch, I do what I can, and Heavenly Father does the rest.

Jennifer Hansen, Washington



Long-term Aid Helps Tsunami Victims along the Road to Recovery

By Karianne Salisbury, Church Magazines

It was a long process for Sukardi of Indonesia and his family to find closure and hope following the 2004 tsunami that devastated the coasts of Southeast Asia.

“We thought it was the end of the world; it was unbelievable,” said Sukardi, looking back to December 26, 2004, the day a massive underwater earthquake struck off the coast of Indonesia, causing a tsunami that killed more than 225,000 people in 11 countries. “But we are alive, and we are together, and we are happy.”

Sukardi, like thousands of others, lost family members and friends, his home, land, and nearly his own life. After being washed away with the tsunami, he managed to grab hold of a coconut tree and cling to it as he waited for the floodwaters to recede.

Joined by family members, each with similar survival stories, Sukardi now resides in a home built with the help of Latter-day Saint Charities, an arm of Church Humanitarian Services, as part of the Church’s efforts to assist tsunami survivors.

Committing to Long-Term Recovery

The Church’s emergency relief efforts during the months immediately following the tragedy provided commodities such as food, hygiene kits, medical



This new community center was provided next to the local mosque as part of the Church’s tsunami recovery efforts.

supplies, and clothing. Because of members’ significant donations, the Church began planning longer-term relief. As part of that long-term

effort, fishermen and carpenters were given jobs constructing more than 130 replacement fishing boats. Men were hired to use large,

wide-tracked backhoes to help reconstruct the dikes around shrimp farms. Sewing machines, looms, hand tractors, and other tools were donated to encourage a return to self-sufficiency.

“All of the first year was focused on reestablishing livelihood and helping individuals get back to work,” said Brett Bass, director of Church Humanitarian Services. “Then we looked at our resources, identified the most pressing needs, and refocused our efforts on permanent reconstruction.”

The Church’s efforts included constructing community centers, homes, schools, medical clinics, and clean water systems—all made possible by a tremendous outpouring of humanitarian generosity by Church members from around the world.

The Church’s monumental efforts in Indonesia



New teachers prepare to teach at the Min Lampuuk school, one of 15 built to replace schools destroyed by the tsunami in 2004.



Jim Greeding shakes hands with Abdul Samad, who lived in community barracks with his children for two years after losing his wife and his mother.

concluded in December 2007. Major projects included building 902 homes and 3 community centers, constructing 15 schools, building 3 fully equipped health clinics, rebuilding a hospital wing, and completing 24 village water projects.

Rebuilding Homes and Lives

Abdul Samad lived in a hastily constructed community barracks for two and a half years before he and his family moved into their new home. He lost his wife and her mother in the flood but now hopes to make life better for his remaining family, three daughters and a son.

Each of the 902 homes built and donated is 44 square meters. The hundreds of recipients frequently said they believe their homes were the best homes built and that they would pass them on to their children and grandchildren. They expressed gratitude for having something solid and

reliable in their lives again.

“When the earthquake hit and the tsunami followed, the first thing they did, if they were in their house, was run outside,” said Jeff McMurdo from the International Organization for Migration, which partnered with the Church to build homes. “From the moment it started, they were running. So when they get the keys to a house, they are able to get some measure of closure to the whole tragedy of the tsunami experience.”

Establishing Schools and Hope

The Church partnered with Islamic Relief and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency to build 15 schools, train new teachers, and develop curriculum and education support systems.

Many of the area’s teachers were killed in the tsunami. Kamaruzzaman, a teacher from Banda Aceh, is one of just two surviving

teachers from his school.

“They have been going to a temporary building for school—a community hall where there are about 40 students in the room,” said Kamaruzzaman, who is now a head schoolmaster of a newly built school.

Each school building was furnished with desks, whiteboards, and libraries. As more teachers became available, an emphasis was put on training and developing new curriculum.

“The students now have a better school that’s more helpful to learning. They now have a more hopeful future,” said Kamaruzzaman.

Herliana, an education coordinator for Islamic Relief, is proud to be a part of this project. “There were no

schools; there were few trained teachers left,” she said. “This has been a great contribution to the communities. Together we are making a big difference in the lives of the children, teachers, parents, and families.”

Providing Clean Water

Fauziah, an animated and smiling woman, is now a water operator for her small village near Bireuen in Aceh Province. In this position, she keeps records and collects water-usage fees from those who use the community’s new water system.

In partnership with International Relief and Development, the Church completed 24 village water projects that consisted of renovating wells, installing

Other Aid Ongoing in Indonesia

Though the Church has concluded a major undertaking with its long-term tsunami relief projects in Indonesia, Humanitarian Services will continue a variety of ongoing aid projects and has no intention of walking away from new relationships forged and old relationships strengthened during the tsunami relief efforts.

“We were doing humanitarian work in Indonesia before the tsunami, and we continue to do projects in that nation today,” said Brett Bass, director of Church Humanitarian Services.

Since the beginning of

2007, more than two dozen humanitarian aid projects have been completed or are ongoing. Among those projects were emergency relief to victims of flooding in Jakarta and Solo, of mud flows in Java, and of earthquakes in Sumatra and Bengkulu.

Other projects include donating wheelchairs and vocational training materials to the disabled, supplying medical equipment to a hospital, sponsoring a number of pediatric surgeries, providing furniture and sanitation equipment to various schools, and overseeing several projects to bring clean water to villages that had none. ■



Yards have already been enclosed around these two of the more than 900 new homes built in Indonesia.

storage tanks, improving sanitation, and upgrading delivery systems. These efforts are providing clean water to 20,000 people.

“Before, it was hard to get good water and it took a long time to go get it,” said Fauziah as she expressed gratitude to have access right outside her home. “Now our children will be healthier and will have a better future.”

Bath and laundry facilities were also built in the villages, and residents received training on how to take care of the facilities and keep them clean.

Improving Health Care

While each village also received personal hygiene training, the more elaborate efforts to improve health care moved forward with the completion of three fully equipped health

clinics and the rebuilding of a hospital wing.

“This is much-needed,” said Syarman, a community leader in the Bireuen district, where access to medical care previously required a 15-kilometer walk. “Our people will be able to get needed medical assistance near their homes. It is better than before, and we are grateful.”

The Church also arranged training for doctors and medical staff and provided needed medical equipment.

Doing It the Lord’s Way

For Bill and Linda Hamm of Anchorage, Alaska, USA, the work presented a personal challenge: they were called to serve as humanitarian service missionaries to oversee tsunami relief efforts in Indonesia. “We were exhilarated by the

challenges and overwhelmed by the opportunity,” Brother Hamm said.

This opportunity was also extended to Jim and Karen Greeding of Thousand Oaks, California, USA. They were called to oversee the completion of the projects after Brother and Sister Hamm’s 18-month mission concluded.

“We were to oversee the quality of the work and to make sure the money allotted for projects was being used properly,” Sister Greeding said.

Church representatives were present at every stage of the process; that provision, combined with its funding methods, distinguished the Church from other organizations.

“We regarded our finances as sacred funds and made every effort to see these funds used efficiently and not wasted,” said Bill Reynolds, director of field operations for tsunami relief. “We provided sequential funding that relied on benchmark expectations that we personally oversaw. The organizations we worked with knew that if we said we wanted something done and in a certain way, they needed to meet those expectations.”

Restoring Hope

The Church focused on helping Indonesia and its people take a simple step forward, a step away from tragedy and pain, a step

toward reestablishing life. While these efforts played just a small part among those of the many individuals and organizations that offered aid to the tsunami victims, the missionaries were able to share their love, the love of the members, and the pure love of Christ.

“We were not permitted to proselyte, but we were representing the Lord and tried to share our testimonies through our work by being kind and polite or simply by smiling,” Sister Hamm said. “Sometimes we had the opportunity to explain where the funds came from, and we told about our prophet and how he called for a 24-hour fast, with the money that would otherwise be spent on food to be donated to a special fund. I think the Spirit bore witness and they understood that there were individuals around the world who loved them.”

Evidences of the tsunami are still very much apparent, but the people have expressed gratitude for every effort that has been made on their behalf.

“This is simply an experience you can never forget, and anyone who travels to these areas will not be able to miss the evidences of destruction where the land became sea permanently, where so many lost their lives and loved ones,” Sister Greeding said. “But many who were suspicious of Christians have changed their hearts. Some stared at us, but most in their limited English said to us, ‘Thank you, mister.’ We heard that often.” ■

TEMPLE NEWS

Rexburg Temple Becomes 125th in Operation

President Thomas S. Monson dedicated the Rexburg Idaho Temple in four sessions on February 10, 2008, in one of his first acts as the 16th President of the Church. He was accompanied by Elder Russell M. Nelson and Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Located to the south of Brigham Young University—Idaho, the Rexburg Idaho Temple is the Church's 125th

worldwide and the third in Idaho. Approximately 200,000 individuals attended the open house during the month before the dedication.

The 57,504-square-foot (5,100-square-meter) temple was first announced in December 2003, and ground was broken in July 2005. The temple's exterior features a quartz rock finish and 700 art-glass windowpanes. The temple serves approximately 47,000 Church members in eastern Idaho. ■

Curitiba Brazil Temple Dedication Set

The Curitiba Brazil Temple was to be dedicated in four sessions on June 1, 2008, following a cultural celebration on May 31 and a public open house from May 10 to 24.

The Curitiba Brazil Temple thus becomes the 126th temple operating worldwide and the fifth in Brazil. Temples are also located in Campinas,

Porto Alegre, Recife, and São Paulo. The Manaus Brazil Temple, which was announced in 2007, will be Brazil's sixth temple.

The Curitiba temple was first announced in August 2002, and ground was broken in March 2005. It will serve more than 42,000 members, including those from 21 stakes in the states of Paraná and Santa Catarina. ■

Dedication Announced for Panama City Temple

The First Presidency has announced open house and dedication dates for the Panama City Panama Temple, the 127th operating temple worldwide.

The temple, which is the first in Panama, will open to the public on July 11, 2008, and will remain open until July 26, excluding Sundays. A cultural celebration will

take place on August 9 before the four dedicatory sessions scheduled for Sunday, August 10, 2008. The temple will open for ordinances on Monday, August 11.

Construction began in October 2005 after Elder

Spencer V. Jones of the Seventy, then President of the Central America Area, broke ground. The temple was announced in August 2002. There are approximately 22,000 members in seven stakes and three districts in Panama. ■

Twin Falls Idaho Temple Set to Open

The First Presidency has announced open house and dedication dates for the Twin Falls Idaho Temple, the Church's 128th operating temple.

A public open house will be held July 11 through August 16, 2008, except for Sundays.

The temple will be dedicated in four sessions on August 24, 2008, and will open for ordinances the next day. On the evening prior to

the dedication the community will host a cultural celebration.

The Twin Falls Idaho Temple will serve thousands of members in 14 stakes in southern Idaho. Plans for the temple were announced in October 2004, and ground was broken in April 2006. The temple will be the fourth in Idaho, the state with the third largest membership in the United States. ■



Twin Falls Temple

Competition Seeks Art Submissions

The Museum of Church History and Art invites members from around the world to submit their original artwork for the Eighth International Art Competition. The theme is “Remembering the Great Things of God.” About 225 pieces will be selected for an exhibit to open in March 2009. All submissions must be entered online or postmarked by October 10, 2008. More information about the theme, rules, judging, and submissions is available at lds.org/artcompetition.

New Resources Available on Church Music Site

The Church music Web site now offers in French, Portuguese, and Spanish lessons on conducting or accompanying music and PDF versions of the hymns and *Hymns Made Easy*, a book of simplified hymns. Recordings from the *Children’s Songbook* and *Hymns* in Spanish have also been added.

To access the site visit www.lds.org/churchmusic.

Site Offers Online Focus on the Savior

JesusChrist.lds.org, a Web site featuring the Savior, launched to English audiences on February 25, 2008, with plans to be available in additional languages in the future. Visitors will find information, articles, and multimedia presentations about the Savior focusing on three main themes: faith in Jesus Christ, His life and ministry, and testimonies of Him. Visitors will

have access to materials such as music or video clips and can find direction to other related sources.

Resource Available Online for Military Families

Supporting Military Families, a resource designed to meet the needs of military families in the Church, is now available on LDS.org. The resource covers topics such as preparing for deployment, helping children cope, managing financial challenges, and reintegrating into family life. To access the resource, go to www.lds.org and click on **Serving in the Church**, then on **Military Relations**, then on **Resources for Military Members**.

Art Used on Cover of March Issue Available

The art used as the cover of the March *Ensign* and *Liabona* special issue on the Savior is available through distribution centers worldwide and on LDScatalog.com. Jesus Christ (detail from *Christ with Boy*), by Carl Heinrich Bloch, will be available in three different sizes. ■



Comments

Raising the Bar

We related strongly to the February 2008 *Ensign* article, “Our Son’s Choices.” We had a similar experience with our son, and are happy that he repented and is now living a gospel-oriented life. However, it sounds likely that the events in your article took place before the Church “raised the bar” for missionaries. Although our son repented and spent a year turning his life around, he was not able to serve a mission because of the serious nature of what he had done. It is important for members to know that while repentance is always possible, serving a mission after leading a wayward life may not be.

Name Withheld

Teaching Support

I’ve been pondering for some time how to increase the amount of thoughtful discussion in my Relief Society class by asking the right kinds of questions. My prayers were answered by Brian Gudmunson’s stimulating article, “Questions, the Heart of Learning and Teaching” (*Ensign*, January 2008, 26). It was perfect.

Thanks!
Jeanine Tew, Utah

March Issue on the Savior:

The March 2008 *Ensign* was great! Not only was it touching, with personal testimonies and experiences, but

educational. I also liked the section that took our beliefs about Christ and shared supporting scriptures from the Bible and Book of Mormon. With a lot of national media coverage on the Church lately, the issue couldn’t have come at a better time. It gives members a resource to answer questions, or we can pass along the magazine to our inquiring family and friends.

Jerelyn Dunaway, Utah

The March 2008 *Ensign* is, in my opinion, the finest yet. As I read each page, the Spirit verified every word. I have not seen a more conclusive, concise treatise of what the Latter-day Saints believe about our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

George Harris, Idaho

The March 2008 issue is truly outstanding in spiritual messages, scope of articles, and artwork. All the illustrations are great, for they enlarge the meaning of the articles, which teach of the deep meaning of the Atonement of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. My heart is moved. I shall go over the March issue repeatedly.

Florence Hedgpeth, Oregon

Clarification

The identification of Easy Company in the article, “Band of Brothers” in the February 2008 *Ensign* is incomplete. It should be Easy Company, 2nd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. ■



The Allegory of the Olive Tree, by Brad Teare

This woodcut illustrates a scene from Jacob 5, in the Book of Mormon. Therein Jacob quotes the prophet Zenos's allegory of the tame and wild olive trees, representing the history and destiny of the house of Israel. Jacob said, "This is my prophecy—that the things which this prophet Zenos spake, concerning the house of Israel, . . . must surely come to pass" (Jacob 6:1).



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