

THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • MARCH 2002

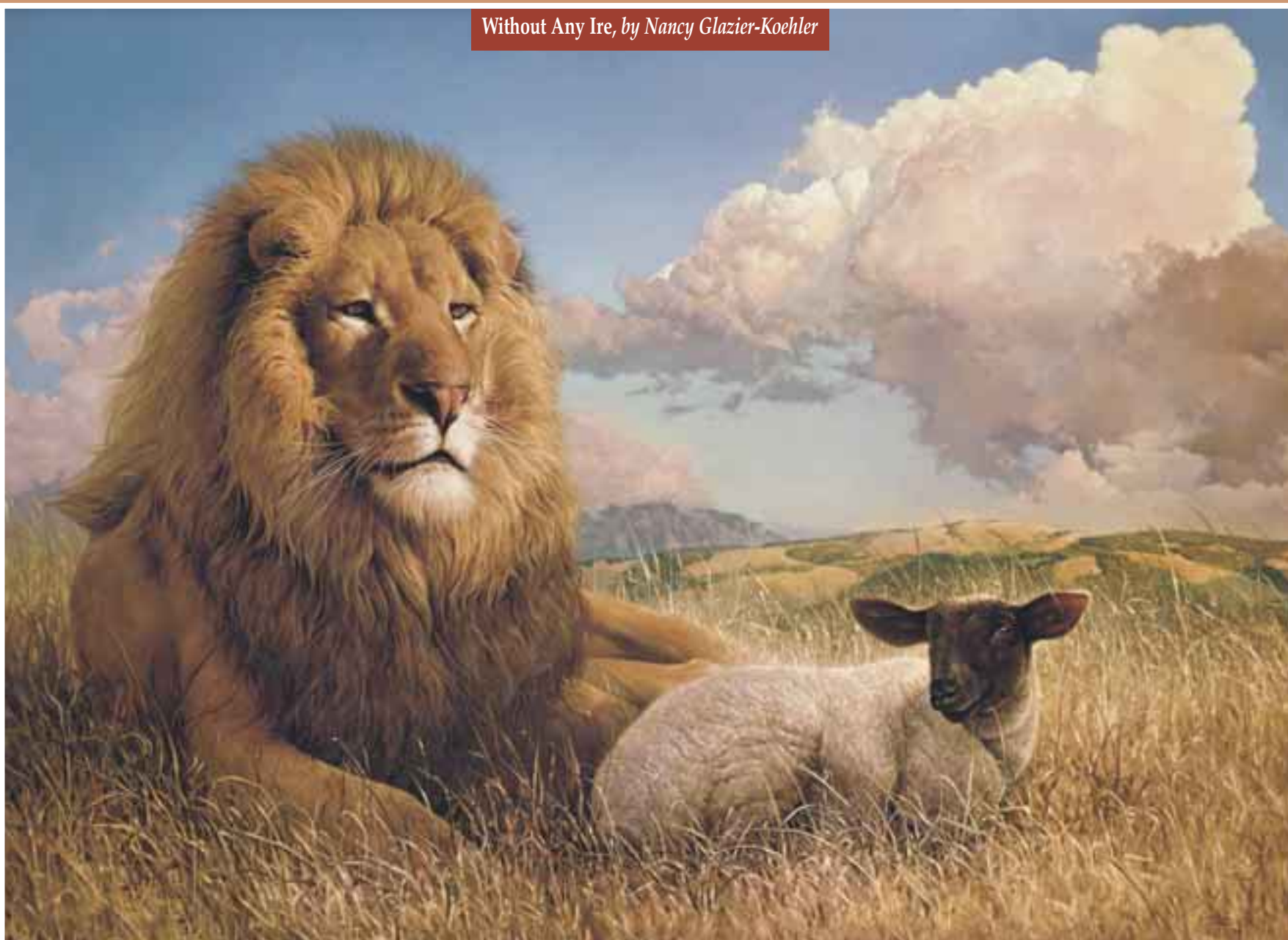
ENSIGN



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New Zealand, p. 42*

*Prepare for Temple
Blessings, p. 16*

Without Any Ire, by Nancy Glazier-Koehler



"How blessed the day when the lamb and the lion Shall lie down together without any ire" ("The Spirit of God," Hymns, no. 2).

ENSIGN

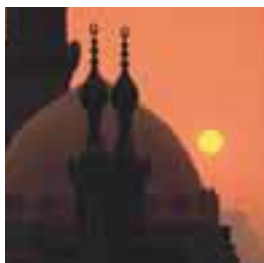
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The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator."



COMMUNION WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT



BY PRESIDENT
JAMES E. FAUST
Second Counselor
in the First Presidency

At a recent press conference, President Gordon B. Hinckley was asked the question, “What is the greatest problem that your church has today?” He answered that it is rapid growth.

It has been nearly 172 years since The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized. Why does the Church continue to flourish and grow so dramatically? What distinguishes it from all other churches? In response, we might say that there are several characteristics peculiar to our faith. These include the organization itself, with prophets and apostles, who Paul said are the foundation of the Church (see Eph. 2:20); the Quorums of the Seventy; lay priesthood leadership; the missionary system; the welfare program; temples; the family history effort; and many other distinguishing features.

WHAT MAKES OUR RELIGION DIFFERENT?

There is, however, another reason for our growth, one that transcends all others. Of an interview in 1839 between the Prophet Joseph Smith and Martin Van Buren, who was then president of the United States, the following was recorded: “In our interview with the President, he interrogated us wherein we differed in our religion from the other religions of the day. Brother Joseph said we differed in mode of baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. We considered that all other considerations were contained in the gift of the Holy Ghost” (*History of the Church*, 4:42).

One of the reasons the Prophet’s response was so inspired is that the right to enjoy the marvelous gifts of the Holy Ghost is conferred upon every member of the Church soon after baptism. This is in fulfillment of the promise of the Savior: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” (John 14:16).

This powerful gift entitles the leaders and all worthy members of the Church to enjoy the gifts and companionship of the Holy Ghost, a member of the Godhead whose function is to inspire, reveal, and teach all things. The result of this endowment is that since the Church was organized, the leadership and

members have enjoyed, and now enjoy, continuous revelation and inspiration directing them in what is right and good. Inspiration and revelation are so common, so widespread, so universal among the leaders and the members that there is a strong spiritual base underlying what is done. This can be found in the gatherings of the Church, both large and small.

Why does the Church grow and flourish? It does so because of divine direction to the leaders and members. This began in our day when God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith early in the spring of 1820. However, we claim that God's inspiration is not limited to the Latter-day Saints. The First Presidency has stated: "The great religious leaders of the world such as Mohammed, Confucius, and the Reformers, as well as philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God's light. Moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals. . . . We believe that God has given and will give to all peoples sufficient knowledge to help them on their way to eternal salvation" ("Statement of the First Presidency regarding God's Love for All Mankind," 15 Feb. 1978).

We declare in all solemnity, however, that we know salvation in the world to come is dependent upon accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ as taught in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One factor in salvation is personal revelation. Joseph Smith said: "No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator" (*History of the Church*, 6:58).

THE RIGHT OF PERSONAL REVELATION

Latter-day Saints, having received the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, are entitled to personal inspiration in the small events of life as well as when they are confronted with the giant Goliaths of life. If worthy, we are entitled to receive revelations for ourselves, parents for their children, and members of the Church in their callings. But the right of revelation for others does not extend beyond our own stewardship.

David, the youngest son of Jesse, a mere shepherd boy, volunteered to fight the giant Goliath. David and all of the army of Israel were insulted

by the humiliating taunts of this formidable giant, but David knew that inspiration had brought him to save Israel. King Saul was so impressed with the faith and determination of this young boy that he appointed him to fight Goliath. Goliath made sport of David's youth and lack of armament. David responded that he came in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, and that the whole assembly would learn that the Lord does not save by the sword and the spear, "for the battle is the Lord's" (1 Sam. 17:47). Then David threw a rock from his sling with such force and accuracy that the stone sank deep into the forehead of Goliath. Goliath fell to the earth a dying man, and the Philistines fled in fear.

What has happened to David's living God? It is the greatest insult to reason to suggest that God, who spoke so freely to the prophets of the Old Testament, now stands mute, uncommunicative, and silent.

We may well ask, "Does God love us less than those led by the ancient prophets? Do we need His guidance and instruction less? Reason suggests that this cannot be. Does He not care? Has He lost His voice? Has He gone on a permanent vacation? Does He sleep?" The unreasonableness of each of these proposals is self-evident.

When the Savior taught in the synagogue at Capernaum, He proclaimed His divinity in no uncertain terms. The Apostle John states:

"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

"And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:66-69).

We acknowledge and testify that the same witness of Christ's divinity as received by Peter is also our sacred knowledge.

Personal revelation comes as a testimony of truth and as guidance in spiritual and temporal matters. Latter-day Saints know that the promptings of the Spirit may be received upon all facets of life, including daily, ongoing decisions. Without seeking the inspiration of the Almighty God, how could anyone think of making an important decision such as "Who is to be my companion?" "What is my work



Why has the Church grown so dramatically over more than 170 years? It does so in large measure because of divine revelation and inspiration.

to be?" "Where will I live?" "How will I live?"

Many faithful Latter-day Saints have been warned by the Spirit when they were faced with injury or possible death. Among these was President Wilford Woodruff, who said:

"When I got back to Winter Quarters from the pioneer journey [1847], President [Brigham] Young said to me, 'Brother Woodruff, I want you to take your wife and children and go to Boston and stay there until you can gather every Saint of God in New England and Canada and send them up to Zion.'

"I did as he told me. It took me two years to gather up everybody, and I brought up the rear with a company (there were about one hundred of them). We arrived at Pittsburgh one day at sundown. We did not want to stay there, so I went to the first steamboat that was going to leave. I saw the captain and engaged passage for us on that steamer. I had only just

done so when the spirit said to me, and that, too, very strongly, 'Don't go aboard that steamer, nor your company.' Of course, I went and spoke to the captain, and told him I had made up my mind to wait.

"Well, that ship started, and had only got five miles down the river when it took fire, and three hundred persons were burned to death or drowned. If I had not obeyed that spirit, and had gone on that steamer with the rest of the company, you can see what the result would have been" (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham [1946], 294–95).

HOW IS PERSONAL REVELATION RECEIVED?

Some guidelines and rules are necessary if one is to be the recipient of revelation and inspiration. They include (1) to try honestly and sincerely to keep God's commandments, (2) to be spiritually attuned as a receiver of a divine message, (3) to ask God in humble, fervent prayer, and (4) to seek answers with unwavering faith.

I testify that inspiration can be the spring for every person's hope, guidance, and strength. It is one of the magnified treasures of life. It involves coming to the infinite knowledge of God.



How do revelation and inspiration operate? Each person has a built-in “receiving set” which, when fine-tuned, can be a receiver of divine communication. Said Job, “There is a spirit in man: and . . . the Almighty giveth them understanding” (Job 32:8). If needed, it is possible, like Nephi, to be led completely by the Spirit, “not knowing beforehand” what should be done (see 1 Ne. 4:6).

How is inspiration received? Enos stated, “While I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came into my mind” (Enos 1:10). One does not necessarily hear an audible voice. The spirit of revelation comes by divine confirmation. “I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart,” says the Lord (D&C 8:2).

How was the voice of the Lord heard by Elijah the Tishbite? It was not the “strong wind [which] rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks,” nor “after the wind an earthquake,” nor “after the earthquake a fire.” It was “a still small voice” (see 1 Kgs. 19:11–12).

The inner voice of the Spirit has the capacity to whisper through and pierce all things (see D&C 85:6). The scriptures teach, “It was not a voice of thunder, neither was it a voice of a great tumultuous noise, but

Every day leaders of the Church are led by revelation to pronounce blessings and conduct the affairs of the Church.

behold, it was a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper, and it did pierce even to the very soul” (Hel. 5:30).

Thus the Lord, by revelation, brings inspiration into one’s mind as though a voice were speaking. As a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Harold B. Lee gave this testimony: “I have a believing heart because of a simple testimony that came when I was a child, I think maybe I was around ten—maybe eleven—years of age. I was with my father out on a farm away from our home, trying to spend the day busying myself until father was ready to go home. Over the fence from our place were some tumbledown sheds which had attracted a curious boy, adventurous as I was. I started to climb through the fence and I heard a voice as clearly as you are hearing mine—‘Don’t go over there!’ calling me by name. I turned to look at father to see if he were talking to me, but he was way up at the other end of the field.

There was no person in sight. I realized then, as a child, that there were persons beyond my sight and I had heard a voice. And when I [hear] and read these stories of the Prophet Joseph Smith, I, too, know what it means to hear a voice because I've heard from an unseen speaker" (*Divine Revelation*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [15 Oct. 1952], 5).

REVELATION FOR THE CHURCH

Although every faithful member of the Church is entitled to receive personal revelation, there is only one man upon the earth who receives revelation for the Church. President Wilford Woodruff said, "The Church of God could not live twenty-four hours without revelation" (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 61).

A member has written: "Every day men and women come, by revelation, to understand the basic truth that God has restored his gospel and church.

"Every day leaders of the Church are led by revelation to conduct the affairs of the Church, general and local, throughout the world.

"Every day Latter-day Saint missionaries are impressed by the spirit of revelation to bear witness, to know what to say, to know what to do, and to teach by the spirit of revelation.

"Every day the mind and will of the Lord as revealed in the standard works of the Church are illuminated in the minds of the Latter-day Saints by the spirit of revelation.

"Every day faith is increased in the hearts of the faithful by evidences of revelation in their lives—in decisions regarding marriage, vocations, home concerns, business ventures, lesson preparations, danger signals—in fact, in all facets of life.

"Every Latter-day Saint may know by the spirit of revelation that President Joseph Fielding Smith spoke the truth when he said: "The Lord not only blesses the men who stand at the head and hold the keys of the kingdom, but he also blesses every faithful individual with the spirit of inspiration" (Roy W. Doxey, *Walk with the Lord* [1973], 173–74; emphasis in original).

Who is the prophet of the world today? I testify that the prophet upon the face of the earth today is Gordon B. Hinckley, who serves as the President of the Church. He is the only person who holds all of the keys of the kingdom of God on earth. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is God's Church

upon the earth, and salvation in God's presence requires acceptance of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ as taught in His Church.

Why has the Church grown so dramatically over more than 170 years? Why does it continue to grow at an ever-increasing pace? It does so in large measure because of divine revelation and inspiration.

I pray that we may so live as to enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost, for the Holy Ghost, under the direction of Almighty God, has led this people and their leaders from the Church's humble beginnings to the great spiritual force it is today. □

Gospel topics: Holy Ghost, inspiration, revelation, Church growth

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

Preparation

After studying this message, think about the value of the gift of the Holy Ghost in your life. Prayerfully choose one or two statements from President Faust you feel will most benefit those you teach. For each statement choose a teaching method or activity that is appropriate for the ages and circumstances of family members. A few examples of how this may be done are listed below.

Suggestions for Teaching

1. Invite family members to search for answers to the following questions as they take turns reading President Faust's message: What makes our religion different from other religions? Why does the Church grow and flourish? What does the gift of the Holy Ghost entitle a person to receive? What are some guidelines for receiving revelation? Who receives revelation for the Church? Invite family members to show where in the message they found each answer.

2. Relate your feelings about the value of receiving and responding to the influence of the Holy Ghost.

3. Have family members take turns saying a short sentence, each using a different sound level. Have at least one person yell and one whisper. Discuss the sound levels the voice of the Spirit uses to give inspiration (see section "How Is Revelation Received?"). Testify of the strength, guidance, and hope one may receive from the Holy Ghost.



Motherhood

through the Ages



COURTESY BLAKE AND NANCY RONEY

Two Latter-day Saint artists capture the intimacy of the loving relationship that exists between mother and infant. Above: Nancy and Kaedon, by William Whitaker. Left: Encircling Love, by Sheri Lynn Boyer Doty.

The timeless nature and joy of motherhood are captured below in the words of one Latter-day Saint mother. In the artwork above and on the following pages, artists expand the message from mother and infant to families.

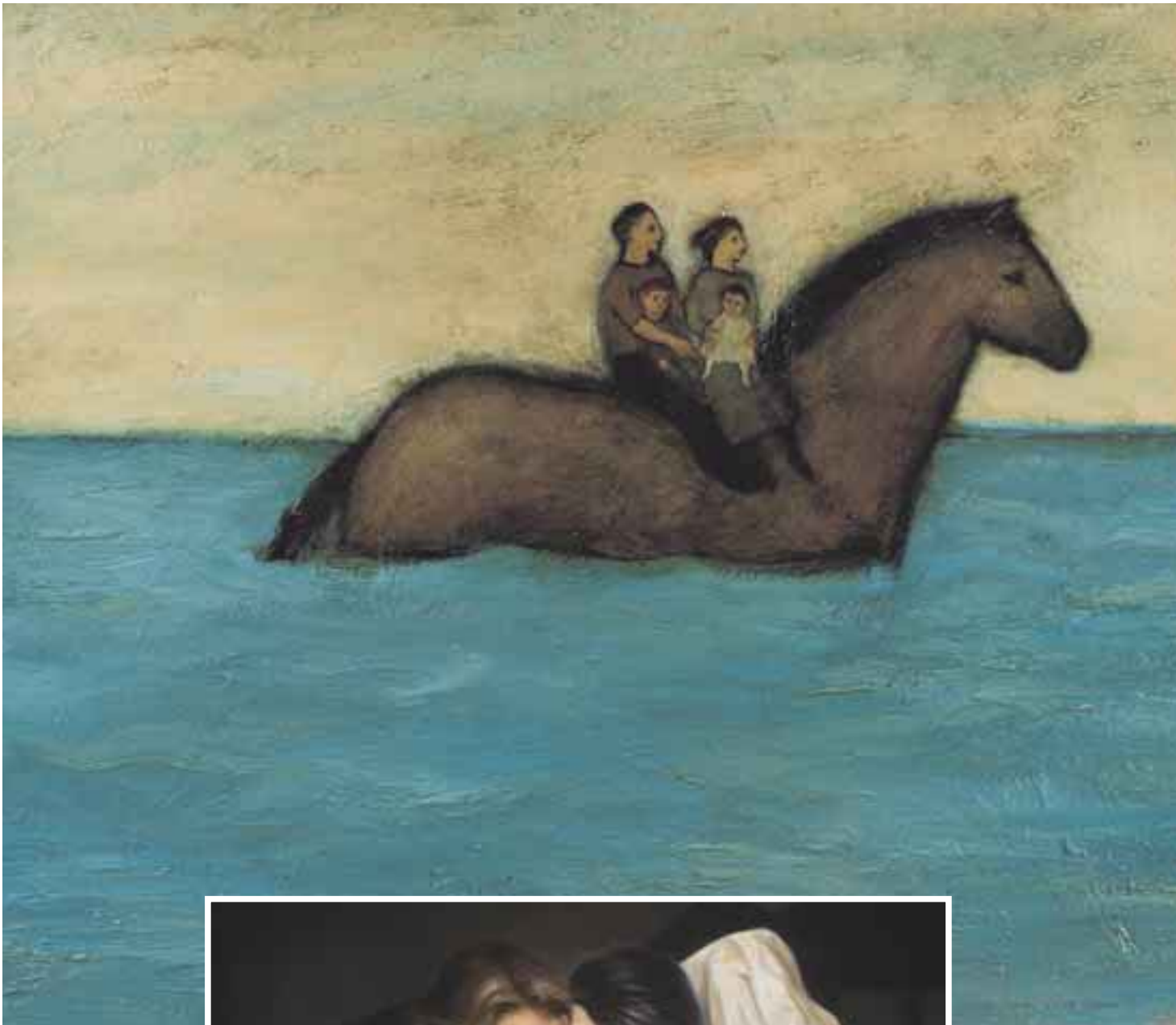
It was twilight as I sat down in the nursery with our baby in my arms. I felt exhausted. One day seemed to blend into the next in a never-ending round of feeding and sleeping, feeding and sleeping. Twilight, however, was my favorite time of day as I rocked and nursed our baby in the semidarkened room. It was a welcome interval of peace and a time to rest from the hurries of the day.

As I hummed and rocked, I looked down at tiny hands tightly grasping my finger and then into our baby's face with his endearing toothless grin. As my son gave a small sigh of satisfaction, I wondered how

many mothers of the 1800s, 1700s, or even the 1600s had looked upon a similar scene. I felt a great bond of sisterhood that night—something I had never experienced before. I realized that I was simply one more link in the long chain of motherhood. I felt as if these mothers of the past—thousands upon thousands of them—had united together and were waiting to buoy me up. Motherhood took on a new meaning for me that night.

As I gently laid my now-sleeping son in bed, I could almost see the hands of the past beside mine as I carefully pulled up the quilt, smoothed my son's soft head, and bestowed one last goodnight kiss. I shut the nursery door behind me with a silent prayer of thanks for my newfound source of strength—my realization of motherhood throughout the ages.—**Cheryl Avery, Dubuque Ward, Davenport Iowa Stake** □

Gospel topics: motherhood, gratitude



Right: In A Father's Gift, artist Liz Lemon Swindle captures this private moment in the lives of Joseph and Emma Smith as they snuggle with the newly adopted Murdock twins. Both Emma Smith and Julia Murdock gave birth to twins on 30 April 1831, but Emma's twins died, as did Julia Murdock. The father, John Murdock, gave his twins to the Smiths to adopt.



Above: The unique style of Brian Kershnik portrays the vulnerability of the family and the need for family unity in his painting Large Horse, Small Rider.



Below: Jeanne Lundberg Clarke uses color and pattern to create a vibrant representation of a solid family unit in Inheritance.



Left: California artist Keith Mallett honors the family unit in the print Family Circle, which hangs in the Family History Library in Salt Lake City.

Happiness in Womanhood

Modern scripture reaffirms the sacred responsibilities of women as daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers.

BY SUSAN EASTON BLACK

The world gives women little convincing direction for the process of achieving long-lasting happiness in womanhood. There are conflicting worldly advisers on every side, seeming to agree only that old ways are to be rejected and replaced by roles that discount the truths of eternity. In contrast, the lives of three women mentioned in the Doctrine and Covenants assure today's woman of the Lord's continuous approbation of her sacred responsibilities as a righteous daughter, sister, wife, and mother.

AS A DAUGHTER AND SISTER

The joyous unfolding of the great plan of salvation began for women when the earth was created. Adam was this earth's first man, and Eve was the first woman. Since then Mother Eve's faithful daughters have worshiped the true and living God and found happiness in mortality.

The Lord spoke to the Prophet Joseph Smith concerning one such exemplary daughter and sister, Vienna Jacques.¹ In many ways Vienna is a representative model of the many women who, by their words and actions, respect their sacred responsibilities. Vienna was a single woman in her early 40s when she first became acquainted with the Church. She was a devout Christian in Boston, Massachusetts, but she became dissatisfied with her religion and began seeking a church that evidenced the spiritual gifts described in the New Testament. Hearing of Joseph Smith and his newly published Book of Mormon, she requested a copy. At first reading she was not particularly inspired. One night, however, while she was praying, she saw a vision of the Book of Mormon and resolved to know of its truthfulness.

Her conversion was not instantaneous, but it came gradually through continual prayer and study of the scriptures. She read the Book of Mormon until she was convinced of its divinity. In 1831, 43-year-old Vienna traveled alone by canal boat and then by stagecoach to Kirtland, Ohio, to meet the Prophet. After being instructed by him, she accepted baptism. Upon returning to Boston, she was instrumental in the conversion of several family members. On 8 March 1833, after returning to Kirtland, she was instructed by revelation through the Prophet to give \$1,400 and other valuables she had brought from the East to the Church and to settle in Jackson County, Missouri (see D&C 90:28–31).

Vienna Jacques donated all she had to the Lord's Church. In return, she received funds from the bishop to maintain herself. This contribution from a single daughter and sister stands as a memorial to her faith, willingness to sacrifice, and love of God.

Concerning her generous offering, the Prophet Joseph Smith sent a letter to Vienna on 4 September 1833, in which he wrote: "I have often felt a whispering since I received your letter, like this: 'Joseph, thou art indebted to thy God for the offering of thy Sister Vienna, which proved a savior of life as pertaining to thy pecuniary concerns. Therefore she should not be forgotten of thee, for the Lord hath done this, and thou shouldst remember her in all thy prayers and also by letter for she oftentimes calleth on the Lord.'"²

In Missouri, Vienna was forced to abandon her deeded portion of land because of mob violence against the Saints in that region. Concerning her situation there, the Prophet penned these words of counsel: "I was aware when you left Kirtland that the Lord would chasten you, but I prayed fervently in the name of Jesus that you might live to receive your



Three examples of womanhood found in the Doctrine and Covenants, including that of Emma Smith, teach truths that can lead women today to greater happiness now and in the eternal realms.

EMMA'S HYMNS: BY LIZ LEMON SWINDLE

inheritance. . . . Therefore let your heart be comforted; live in strict obedience to the commandments of God, and walk humbly before Him, and He will exalt thee in His own due time. I will assure you that the Lord has respect unto the offering you made.”³

Sister Jacques’s generous nature blessed the lives of many people. Elder Heber C. Kimball (1801–68) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles noted her service in his journal entry concerning illness in Zion’s Camp: “We had to exert ourselves considerable to attend to the sick, for they fell on every hand.” Then he added, “I received great kindness from . . . sister Vienna Jacques, who administered to my wants and also to my brethren—may the Lord reward . . . [her] kindness.”⁴

Before being driven from Missouri, Vienna married Daniel Shearer, a widower. Together they fled to Nauvoo, Illinois. During the westward exodus to the Rockies, more hardship was added to her life when, for unknown reasons, her husband died. At age 60 she drove her own wagon across the plains and into the Salt Lake Valley on 2 October 1847. She was given a lot in the Salt Lake 12th Ward. She died at age 96, and her obituary read, “She was true to her covenants and esteemed the Gospel as a priceless treasure.”⁵

Vienna Jacques was an exemplar of a righteous daughter and sister in her readiness to accept the laws of God, her devotion to the Lord, and her service to others.

AS A WIFE

The pivotal covenant that enables a righteous woman to reach her fullest potential is eternal marriage (see D&C 132:18–19). She desires to be married to a companion, an equal partner, who adheres to the Lord’s commands.

Emma Smith, the Prophet’s wife, is remembered as a woman who faithfully supported her husband.⁶ Emma was a woman of great faith and courage whom the Lord addressed twice in the Doctrine and Covenants: section 25 and again in section 132. Section 25 manifests the will of the Lord to Emma yet gives wise counsel for all women, especially wives in Israel (see D&C 25:16).

Emma’s divine calling was to be the wife of a prophet. In this responsibility the Lord said, “The office of thy calling shall be for a comfort unto my servant, Joseph Smith, Jun., thy husband” (D&C 25:5). She was counseled to use “consoling words, in the spirit of meekness” with him

(D&C 25:5). Emma was to cleave to her husband, Joseph, and to “go with him at the time of his going, and be unto him for a scribe” (D&C 25:6). She was promised that for faithfully fulfilling her calling as his wife, he would “support [her] in the church” (D&C 25:9).

In addition to these instructions, Emma was told to develop her talents and help establish the kingdom of God. Her talents and duties included serving as the Prophet’s scribe as he translated the Bible, expounding the scriptures, exhorting the Church, writing, learning, and selecting sacred hymns (see D&C 25:6–8, 11). The Lord cautioned her that while fulfilling these responsibilities, she was to “murmur not” and was to “lay aside the things of this world, and seek for the things of a better” (D&C 25:4, 10). She was also admonished to “beware of pride” (D&C 25:14). If Emma proved faithful,

she would receive “a crown of righteousness” (D&C 25:15).

The Prophet Joseph Smith loved Emma, and she comforted him, she increased her talents, she helped establish the Church, and she fulfilled her responsibilities as a wife. In his love for her, Joseph pleaded with the Lord on her behalf in March 1836: “Have mercy, O Lord, upon [my] wife and children, that they may be exalted in thy presence, and preserved by thy fostering hand” (D&C 109:69).

In a revelation recorded in July 1843, the Lord again spoke to Emma and commanded her “to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else” (D&C 132:54). She is also encouraged to “forgive my servant Joseph his trespasses; and then shall she be forgiven her trespasses, wherein she has transgressed against me; and I, the Lord thy God, will bless her, and multiply her, and make her heart to rejoice” (D&C 132:56).

The Lord warned Emma that despite her position as a called wife and worker in the kingdom, she must faithfully endure or, as the Lord had told her, “where I am you cannot come” (D&C 25:15).

Throughout her life as a wife, Emma experienced hardship, sorrow, persecution, and severe tests. Despite this, she was faithful to the Lord’s invitation: “Let thy soul delight in thy husband, and the glory which shall come upon him” (D&C 25:14). Emma’s responsibilities were many, and by comparison her weaknesses were few. The lessons from the Lord’s revelations to Emma are clear: a wife is to cleave to her husband and comfort him, serve in the Lord’s



GOD BLESS YOU, MOTHER, BY LIZ LEMON SWINDLE

As a mother, Lucy Mack Smith endured the sorrow of bidding farewell to her sons as they were taken from Far West by angry mobs.

DIVINE CALLINGS



"It is important to gain some understanding of and appreciation for the wonderful endowments and callings God has given uniquely to women."

President James E. Faust of the First Presidency, "The Highest Place of Honor," *Ensign*, May 1988, 36.

kingdom, and endure faithfully to the end.

Just prior to his death, the Prophet Joseph Smith invited Emma to write out a blessing that she would want from him. She wrote in part, "I desire with all my heart to honor and respect my husband as my head, ever to live in his confidence and by acting in unison with him, retain the place which God has given me by his side."⁷

AS A MOTHER

As a righteous wife begins to enjoy an eternal marriage relationship, she will anticipate with joy the opportunity of motherhood. As a mother, she will want her children sealed to her and her husband for all eternity by the sacred ordinances of the temple and the bonds of love (see D&C 138:48).

Although Lucy Mack Smith's name is not in the Doctrine and Covenants, she is mentioned by her designated responsibility as mother of the Prophet Joseph Smith.⁸ The Prophet, in describing his 1836 vision of eternal realms, wrote, "I saw Father Adam and Abraham; and my father and my mother; my brother Alvin, that has long since slept" (D&C 137:5).

Lucy Mack Smith's feelings about her responsibilities as a mother are noted in the minutes of a Church conference held on 8 October 1845 in Nauvoo, Illinois. On that day, Lucy made the following remarks: "I raised up 11 children, 7 boys. We raised them in the fear of God. When they were two or three years old [I told them I wanted them] to love God with all their hearts. [I] want all you to do the same. God gives us our children and we are accountable."⁹

Within a year of her marriage, Lucy's firstborn son was taken in death. Five years later, as the mother of two small children, she became ill and was told by doctors that she would die. She pleaded with the Lord to spare her life so that she might bring comfort to her children and husband. Lucy taught her children religious precepts. She especially encouraged them to study the Bible. Her son William recalled, "My mother . . . was a very pious woman and much interested in the welfare of her children, both here and hereafter, and made use of every means which her parental love could suggest, to get us engaged in seeking for our souls' salvation."¹⁰

Lucy Mack Smith was also well acquainted with sorrow. Some particularly difficult experiences for her were the loss of the family farm in New York, the imprisonment of her husband and children, the death of her husband in 1840, the murder of two sons in 1844, and the death of her son Samuel 32 days later from complications arising from being chased on horseback by a

mob. Of her six sons who lived to maturity, five had died by 1845.

Of her griefs, she said, "I often wonder to hear brethren and sisters murmur at the trifling inconveniences which they have to encounter . . . and I think to myself, salvation is worth as much now as it was in the beginning of the work. But I find that 'all [would] like [to] purchase [it], [but] few the price will pay."¹¹

THE RIGHTEOUS WOMAN

The examples of womanhood found in the Doctrine and Covenants are the same as those found throughout ancient scripture. A woman's willful rejection of these truths not only will affect her but may influence generations that follow. Each woman chooses whether to accept her divine responsibilities or to embrace the counterfeits. The righteous woman, recognizing the increasing peril of following the world's destructive advice, adheres to the truths of the scriptures and modern prophetic counsel. The truths she learns will lead her to the commitment of being a faithful daughter, sister, wife, and mother. Such a commitment will lead her to greater happiness in mortality and joy in the eternal realms. □

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

Gospel topics: womanhood, Doctrine and Covenants

More on this topic: See Richard G. Scott, "The Sanctity of Womanhood," Ensign, May 2000, 36–38; James E. Faust, "How Near to Angels," Ensign, May 1998, 95–97; Spencer W. Kimball, "The Blessings and Responsibilities of Womanhood," Ensign, Mar. 1976, 70–73.

Visit www.lds.org or see Church magazines on CD.

NOTES

1. Vienna Jacques, daughter of Henry and Lucinda Jacques, was born on 10 June 1787 at Beverly, Essex County, Massachusetts.
2. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 26.
3. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 26–27.
4. "Extracts from H. C. Kimball's Journal," as quoted in Jerrie W. Hurd, *Our Sisters in the Latter-day Scriptures* (1987), 65.
5. *Woman's Exponent*, 1 Mar. 1884, 152.
6. Emma Hale Smith, daughter of Isaac Hale and Elizabeth Lewis, was born on 10 July 1804 at Harmony, Pennsylvania.
7. Quoted in Raymond T. Bailey, "Emma Hale: Wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1952), 112–13.
8. Lucy Mack Smith, daughter of Solomon Mack and Lydia Gates, was born on 8 July 1776 at Gilsum, New Hampshire.
9. General Minutes Typescript Collection, Box 94, 3–4, Historical Department Archives.
10. *Church History in the Fulness of Times* (1989), 21–22.
11. *The Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor (1996), xvii–xviii.



Prepare for Blessings of the Temple

Each temple stands as a symbol of our membership in the Church, as a sign of our faith in life after death, and as a stepping-stone to eternal glory for us and our family.



BY ELDER RUSSELL M. NELSON
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Among our many blessings, Sister Nelson and I count our privilege of parenthood as paramount. We have been blessed with 10 children, all of whom have been married in the temple. Our children and their companions have brought us 52 grandchildren. Six of our grandchildren have already been married in the temple. Our greatest desire is that all of them will merit the privilege of a temple endowment and become eligible for all the blessings that God has in store for His faithful children. Of course, our family is subject to the same trials and temptations that beset others. As concerned grandparents in a troubled world, we want our grandchildren to prepare well for their temple blessings. And my calling as an Apostle causes me to have that same concern for all of Heavenly Father's children.

Parents should teach the importance of the temple from a child's earliest days. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught members of the Church

to display a picture of a temple in their homes where children could see it and plan from their earliest years to go there and to remain worthy of that privilege.

Under President Gordon B. Hinckley's inspired direction, temples have become more readily accessible. Now that temples have been prepared for the people, the people need to prepare themselves for the temple.

THE TEMPLE

A temple differs from other houses of worship. Unlike chapels, the temple is closed on the Sabbath so that people can attend church and be with their families on that hallowed day. Temples are open for sacred work on other days of the week. A temple is literally the house of the Lord, reserved for ordinances of eternal significance. Those ordinances include baptisms, marriages, endowments, and sealings.

Each temple is symbolic of our faith in God and an evidence of our faith in life after death. The temple is the object of every activity, every lesson, every progressive step in the Church. All of our efforts in proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and

redeeming the dead lead to the holy temple. President Hinckley declared that “these unique and wonderful buildings, and the ordinances administered therein, represent the ultimate in our worship. These ordinances become the most profound expressions of our theology.”¹ Ordinances of the temple are absolutely crucial. We cannot return to God’s glory without them.

Scriptures describe the temple as “a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God.”²

As a house of learning, the temple becomes “a school of instruction in the sweet and sacred things of God.” Here we learn about “the odyssey of man’s eternal journey from premortal existence through this life to the life beyond.”³

Each temple has been constructed through the consecration and sacrifices of faithful people. From the Prophet Joseph Smith’s prayer dedicating the Kirtland Temple comes this heartfelt declaration: “We have done this work through great tribulation; and out of our poverty we have given of our substance to build a house to thy name, that the Son of Man might have a place to manifest himself to his people.”⁴

We cannot enter such a holy house without thoughtful remembrance of those whose significant sacrifices have made our opportunity possible.

THE ENDOWMENT

In the temple we receive an endowment, which is, literally speaking, a gift. We need to understand the spiritual significance of it and the importance of keeping the sacred covenants and obligations we make in receiving this gift. Each “temple ordinance is not just a ritual to go through, it is an act of solemn promising.”⁵

The temple endowment was given by revelation. Thus, it is best understood by revelation, vigorously sought with a pure heart. President Brigham Young (1801–77) explained that “your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, . . . and gain your eternal exaltation.”⁶

SEALING AUTHORITY

In each temple the sealing authority of the priesthood is exercised. Jesus made reference to that authority when He instructed Peter and other Apostles,

“I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”⁷

That sacred authority has been restored in these latter days. President Hinckley explained that “no king, no president of a nation, no official of any entity in the world of which we are a part has any authority over matters beyond the grave. Everyone is helpless before the reach of death, but the humblest, good, righteous high priest who has received the sealing authority may bind in the heavens that which is bound on the earth.”⁸

Just as priesthood is eternal—without beginning or end—so is the authority of that priesthood. Consequently, the ordinances and covenants of the priesthood also transcend time. The first revelation given by the angel Moroni to the Prophet Joseph Smith referred to this priesthood authority.⁹ In later instructions to the Prophet regarding the temple, the Lord said:

“Let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people;

“For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times.”¹⁰

We are living in that dispensation. Temples, ordinances, covenants, endowments, and sealings have been restored, precisely as prophesied. Ordinances of the temple provide for reconciliation with the Lord and seal families together forever. Obedience to the sacred covenants made in temples qualifies us for eternal life—the greatest gift of God to man.¹¹

Because of the importance of the sealing ordinance, the ideal time for a member to be endowed is in connection with the sealing to his or her spouse. Endowments are extended to full-time missionaries to help them have blessings and eternal insights that will enhance their service. A person’s bishop and stake president will help to determine the optimum timing of these ordinances.

TEMPLE RECOMMEND

Because a temple is sacred, the Lord asks that it be protected from desecration. Anyone may enter who is willing to prepare well for that privilege. The concept of preparation prevails in other fields of endeavor. I remember when I was but a young boy, I told my parents I wanted to attend the university.



Scripture study is part of our spiritual preparation.

They said I could, but only if I worked hard in preliminary schooling and met all the requirements for admission to the university. Similarly, we must qualify for admission to the temple. We prepare physically, intellectually, and spiritually. Eligibility is determined individually for each person applying for a recommend.

Judges in Israel who hold keys of priesthood authority and responsibility help us prepare by conducting temple recommend interviews. These leaders care for us and help us determine if we are ready to attend the temple. They also love the Lord and ensure "that no unclean thing shall be permitted to come into [His] house."¹² Thus, these interviews are conducted in a spirit of accountability.

How do you prepare for a temple recommend? You may consult with your bishopric, as well as your parents, family, stake presidency, teacher, or quorum adviser. The requirements are simple. Succinctly stated, an individual is required to keep the commandments of Him whose house it is. He has set the standards. We enter the temple as His guests.

President Hinckley said, "I urge our people everywhere, with all of the persuasiveness of which I am capable, to live worthy to hold a temple recommend,

to secure one and regard it as a precious asset, and to make a greater effort to go to the house of the Lord and partake of the spirit and the blessings to be had therein."¹³

The Lord would be pleased if every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend. "Interviews . . . for temple recommends, with your bishop and members of your stake presidency are precious experiences. And, in a way, they could be considered meaningful 'dress rehearsals' for that grand colloquy when you will stand before the Great Judge."¹⁴

PHYSICAL PREPARATION FOR THE TEMPLE

Now, with a temple recommend in hand, you are ready for additional preparation. You prepare physically by dressing properly to go to the temple. It is not a place for casual attire. President Hinckley has emphasized self-respect for our physical bodies. That respect should be observed especially by those who would enter a holy temple.¹⁵

In the temple, all are dressed in spotless white. "The symbolic purity of white likewise reminds us that God is to have a pure people."¹⁶ Age, nationality,



Because temples are holy, the Lord asks that we qualify for admission through spiritual preparation. Eligibility is determined through applying for a temple recommend.

LEFT PHOTO BY JED CLARK; RIGHT PHOTO BY CRAIG DIMOND

language—even position in the Church—are of secondary significance. I have attended many endowment sessions when the President of the Church participated. Every man in the room was accorded the same high regard that was extended to the President. All sit side by side and are considered equal in the eyes of the Lord. Through a democracy of dress, temple attendance reminds us that “God is no respecter of persons.”¹⁷

Brides and grooms enter the temple to be married for time and all eternity. In the temple, brides wear dresses that are white, long sleeved, modest in design and fabric, and free of elaborate ornamentation. Men do not wear tuxedos or formal wear. President Boyd K. Packer, now Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “It is pleasing to the Lord when we bathe our bodies and put on clean clothing, however inexpensive the clothing may be. We should dress in such a way that we might comfortably attend a sacrament meeting or a gathering that is proper and dignified.”¹⁸

Speaking of temple attire, mothers can exert a great influence for good among their children and grandchildren. As their skill and circumstances permit, they can provide tangible motivation for their family. A mother’s gift of a hand-embroidered handkerchief or other article of temple clothing can be a powerful incentive for a loving child or grandchild to cherish.

The wearing of the temple garment bears great symbolic significance and represents a continuing commitment. Just as the Savior gave us an example of His ability to endure to the end, wearing the garment is one way we demonstrate enduring faith in Him and in His eternal covenants with us.

Elder Carlos E. Asay (1926–99) of the Seventy wrote an article for the Church magazines titled “The Temple Garment.”¹⁹ I recommend it for reading by interested members. From it I quote: “It is written that ‘the white garment symbolizes purity and helps assure modesty, respect for the attributes of God, and, to the degree it is honored, a token of what Paul regarded as taking upon one the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:13; cf. D&C 27:15).’”²⁰

The First Presidency prepared a letter to the Church on this subject. They wrote: “Practices frequently observed among the members of the Church suggest that some members do not fully understand the covenant they make in the temple to wear the garment in accordance with the spirit of the holy endowment.

“Church members who have been clothed with the garment in the temple have made a covenant to wear it throughout their lives. This has been interpreted to mean that it is worn as underclothing both day and night. . . . The promise of protection and blessings is conditioned upon worthiness and faithfulness in keeping the covenant.

“The fundamental principle ought to be to wear the garment and not to find occasions to remove it. Thus, members should not remove either all or part of the garment to work in the yard or to lounge around the home in swimwear or immodest clothing. Nor should they remove it to participate in recreational activities that can reasonably be done with the garment worn properly beneath regular clothing. When the garment must be removed, such as for swimming, it should be restored as soon as possible.

“The principles of modesty and keeping the body appropriately covered are implicit in the covenant and should govern the nature of all clothing worn. Endowed members of the Church wear the garment as a reminder of the sacred covenants they have made with the Lord and also as a protection against temptation and evil. How it is worn is an outward expression of an inward commitment to follow the Savior.”²¹



Temple attendance prepares us for celestial glory.

MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR THE TEMPLE

In addition to physical preparation, we need to be prepared mentally and spiritually. Because the ordinances and covenants of the temple are sacred, we are under absolute obligation not to discuss outside the temple that which occurs in the temple. Sacred matters deserve sacred consideration.

In this house of learning, we are taught in the Lord’s way. His ways are not our ways. We should not be surprised if teaching techniques differ from those employed in educational pursuits more familiar to us. Temple ordinances and covenants have been an integral part of the gospel since the days of Adam and Eve. Anciently, symbols were used to teach profound truths, and this method of instruction is used in the temple today.

It is necessary, therefore, that we ponder the symbols presented in the temple and see the mighty realities for which each symbol stands.²² “The temple ordinances are so imbued with symbolic meaning as to provide a lifetime of productive contemplation and learning.”²³ The teachings of the temple

are beautifully simple and simply beautiful. They are understood by the humble, yet they can excite the intellect of the brightest minds.

The Church has published information that is widely available and helpful. I recommend that members going to the temple for the first time read selected paragraphs under the following listings in the Bible Dictionary:²⁴

Anoint (page 609, paragraphs 1, 4)

Atonement (page 617, paragraphs 1–2)

Christ (page 633, paragraphs 1–3)

Covenant (page 651, paragraphs 1–2)

Fall of Adam (page 670, paragraphs 1–2)

Sacrifices (pages 765–66, paragraph 1)

Temple (pages 780–81, paragraphs 1–3)

One may wish to peruse the Old Testament, especially Exodus, chapters 26–29, and Leviticus, chapter 8. Second Chronicles, chapter 6, reports Solomon’s dedicatory prayer of the temple in his day. A review of the Old Testament and the books of Moses and Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price may be especially enlightening after one is more familiar with the temple endowment. These books of ancient scripture underscore the antiquity of temple work and the enduring nature of its ordinances.

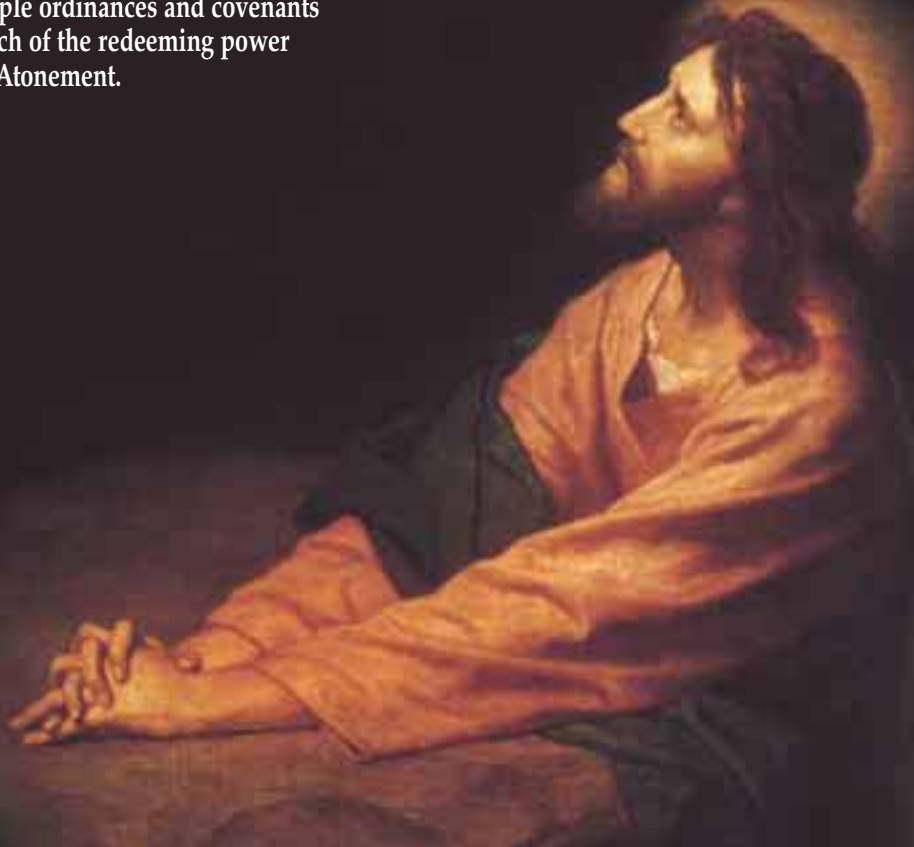
TWO CONCEPTS WORTHY OF SPECIAL EMPHASIS

There are two concepts we especially need to keep in mind as we prepare for the temple. The first is *covenant*. We need to remember that a covenant is a promise. A covenant made with God should be regarded not as restrictive but as protective. Covenants with Him protect us from danger.

This concept is not new. If our water supply is of questionable quality, for example, we filter the water. Similarly, divine covenants shield us from harm. When we choose to deny ourselves of all ungodliness,²⁵ we lose nothing of value and gain glory known only to those who obtain eternal life. Keeping a temple covenant is not constraining but enabling. It elevates us beyond limits of our own perspective and power. It is like the difference between plodding through a muddy field and soaring through the skies in a supersonic jet. Keeping a covenant with God is both protective and enabling.

The second concept to stress in our mental preparation is *Atonement*. The Atonement of Jesus Christ is the central act of all human history. It is the core of the plan of salvation. Without the infinite Atonement, all mankind would be irretrievably lost.

Temple ordinances and covenants teach of the redeeming power of the Atonement.



LEFT PHOTO BY JOHN LUKE, RIGHT, CHRIST IN GETSEMANE, BY HEINRICH HOFMANN

Temple ordinances and covenants teach of the redeeming power of the Atonement.

BLESSINGS OF TEMPLE SERVICE

Service in the temple brings blessings to us in this life as well as in eternity. Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that “temple work is not an escape from the world but a reinforcing of our need to better the world while preparing ourselves for another and far better world. Thus, being in the Lord’s house can help us to be different from the world in order to make more difference in the world.”²⁶

If we are true and faithful in this life, we may obtain eternal life. Immortality is to live forever. Eternal life means more than simply being immortal. Eternal life is to gain exaltation in the highest heaven and live in the family unit. God declared that His grand mission statement—“my work and my glory”—is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”²⁷ His gift of immortality is unconditional—a free gift of salvation to all humankind. The possibility of eternal life—even exaltation—is available to us through our obedience to covenants made and ordinances received in holy temples of God.

President Hinckley provided this excellent summary: “There is a goal beyond the Resurrection. That is exaltation in our Father’s kingdom. It will be achieved by obedience to the commandments of God. It will begin with acceptance of him as our Eternal Father and of his son as our living Redeemer. It will involve participation in various ordinances, each one important and necessary. The first of these is baptism by immersion in water, without which, according to the Savior, a man cannot enter into the kingdom of God. There must follow the birth of the Spirit, the gift of the Holy Ghost. Then in succession through the years will come, for men, ordination to the priesthood, followed by the blessings of the temple for both men and women who are worthy to enter therein. These temple blessings include our washings and anointings that we may be clean before the Lord. They include the instruction service in which we are given an endowment of obligations and blessings that motivate us to behavior compatible with the principles of the gospel. They include the sealing ordinances by which that which is bound on earth is bound in heaven, providing for the continuity of the family.”²⁸

The blessings of the temple become most meaningful when our loved ones are taken in death from our family circles. To know that our period of separation is but temporary provides peace that passes

ordinary understanding.²⁹ President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) wrote, “Through the power of this priesthood which Elijah bestowed, husband and wife may be sealed, or married for eternity; children may be sealed to their parents for eternity; thus the family is made eternal, and death does not separate the members.”³⁰ Blessed with eternal sealings, we can face death as a necessary component of God’s great plan of happiness.³¹

ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

An eternal perspective helps us maintain complete fidelity to the covenants we make. President Packer emphasized that “ordinances and covenants become our credentials for admission into [God’s] presence. To worthily receive them is the quest of a lifetime; to keep them thereafter is the challenge of mortality.”³²

Ordinances of the temple relate not only to our eternal glory but also to that of our departed ancestors. “For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, . . . they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect.”³³ Service in their behalf provides an opportunity for our continuing temple worship, selflessly rendered as a vicarious work patterned after that of the Lord as He wrought the Atonement to bless all who would ever live.

One day we will surely meet our Maker and stand before Him at the bar of judgment. Scripture teaches us that “the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name.”³⁴ The Lord Himself will determine whether we have been true to the covenants we made with Him in the temple and thus merit the glorious blessings He has promised those who keep their covenants.

This perspective gives us strength to endure the trials of life. President Packer stated, “The ultimate purpose of all we teach is to unite parents and children in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are happy at home, sealed in an eternal marriage, linked to their generations, and assured of exaltation in the presence of our Heavenly Father.”³⁵

Each temple stands as a symbol of our membership in the Church, as a sign of our faith in life after death, and as a stepping-stone to eternal glory for us and our family. I pray that each member of the Church will prepare for the marvelous blessings of the temple. □

Gospel topics: temple, temple preparation, temple service, covenants



Temple marriage is part of the eternal perspective.

NOTES

1. "Of Missions, Temples, and Stewardship," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 53.
2. D&C 88:119; 109:8.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 635.
4. D&C 109:5.
5. Hinckley, *Teachings*, 638.
6. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1941), 416.
7. Matt. 16:19.
8. *Teachings*, 639.
9. See D&C 2:1 (dated 21 Sept. 1823); see also 138:47–48.
10. D&C 124:40–41.
11. See D&C 14:7.
12. D&C 109:20; see also 2 Chr. 23:19; D&C 97:15.
13. *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 53.
14. Russell M. Nelson, "Choices," *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 75.
15. See "Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 52; "Your Greatest Challenge, Mother," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 99. In these addresses, President Hinckley read the statement of the First Presidency and the Twelve that "the Church discourages tattoos. It also discourages the piercing of the body for other than medical purposes, although it takes no position on the minimal piercing of the ears by women for one pair of earrings." See also "A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth," *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 11; *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 7–8.
16. Neal A. Maxwell, "Not My Will, But Thine" (1988), 135; see also D&C 100:16.
17. Acts 10:34; see also Moro. 8:12.
18. *The Holy Temple* (1980), 73.
19. "The Temple Garment," *Ensign*, Aug. 1997, 19–23; *Liahona*, Sept. 1999, 32–39.
20. *Ensign*, Aug. 1997, 20; emphasis in original.
21. Letter from the First Presidency, 10 Oct. 1988.
22. See John A. Widtsoe, "Temple Worship," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Apr. 1921, 62.
23. Richard G. Scott, "Receive the Temple Blessings," *Ensign*, May 1999, 27.
24. Members of the Church who do not read English may find comparable terms in their language editions of the Guide to the Scriptures.
25. See Moro. 10:32; JST, Matt. 16:26, in Matt. 16:24, footnote a.
26. "Not My Will, But Thine," 133.
27. Moses 1:39.
28. "Temples and Temple Work," *Ensign*, Feb. 1982, 3.
29. See Philip. 4:7.
30. *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 2:118.
31. See Alma 42:8.

32. "Covenants," *Ensign*, May 1987, 24.
33. D&C 128:15.
34. 2 Ne. 9:41.
35. "The Shield of Faith," *Ensign*, May 1995, 8.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

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

1. How do we prepare ourselves physically, intellectually, and spiritually to attend the temple?
2. Why is it necessary to obtain a temple recommend in order to enter the house of the Lord? What must a person do to obtain one?
3. What do we demonstrate to the Lord by faithfully wearing the temple garment as instructed?
4. What are some of the blessings of the temple, both immediate and future?

The desire to be together eternally helps us maintain complete fidelity to the covenants we make in the temple.



LEFT PHOTO BY WELDEN ANDERSEN; RIGHT PHOTO BY CRAIG DIMOND

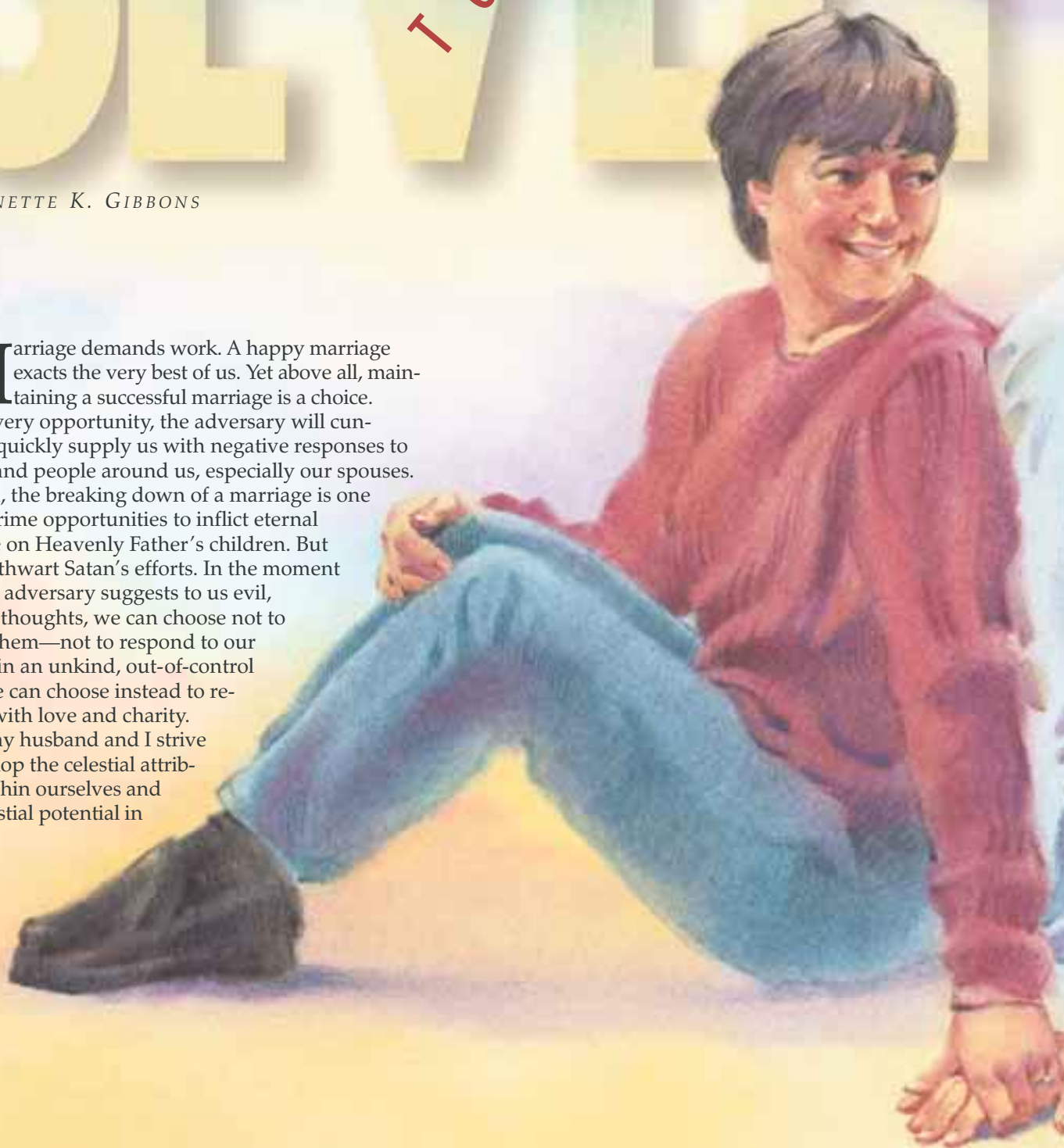
SEVEN TO STRENGTHEN

BY JANETTE K. GIBBONS

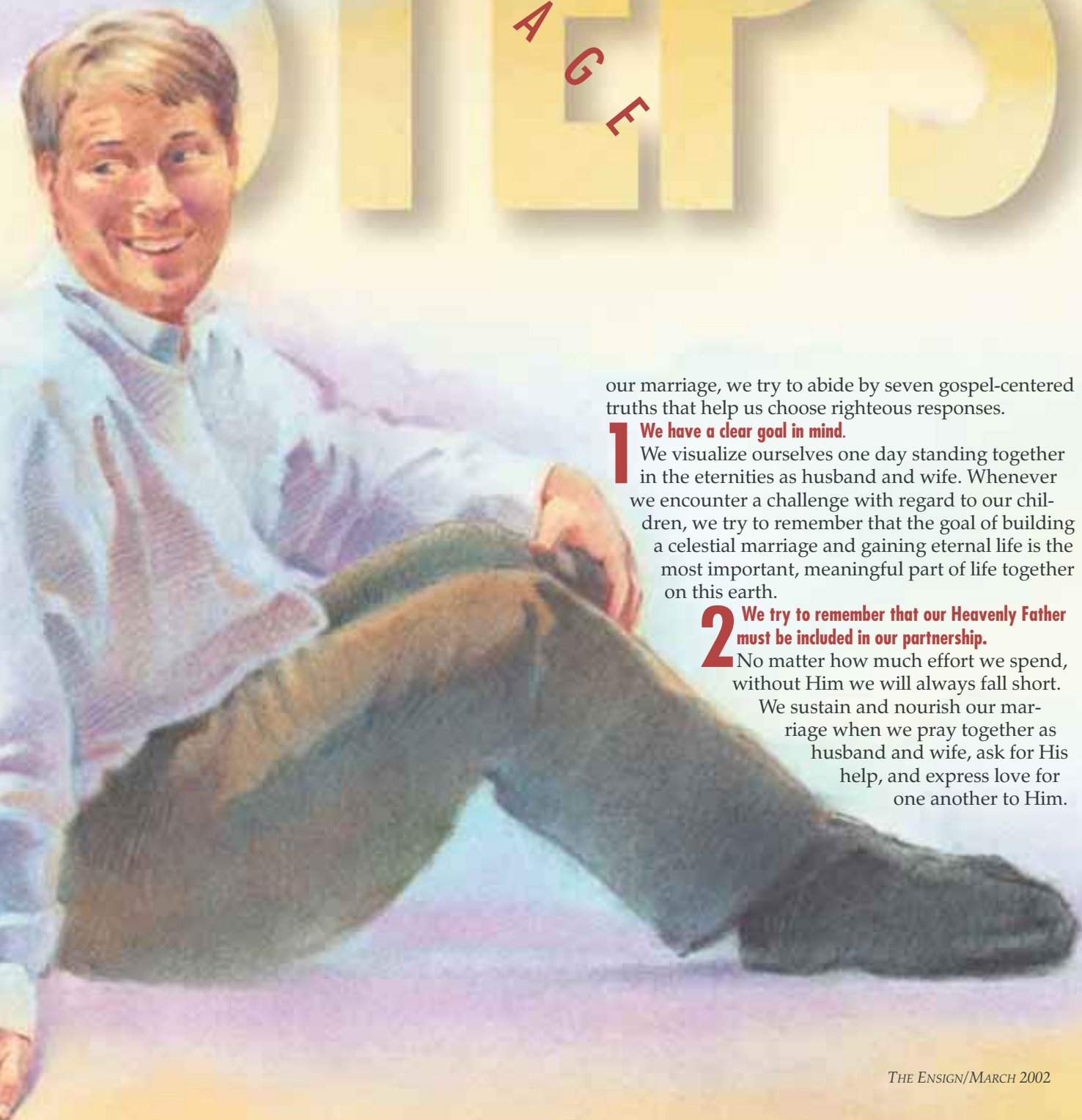
Marriage demands work. A happy marriage exacts the very best of us. Yet above all, maintaining a successful marriage is a choice.

At every opportunity, the adversary will cunningly, quickly supply us with negative responses to events and people around us, especially our spouses. After all, the breaking down of a marriage is one of his prime opportunities to inflict eternal damage on Heavenly Father's children. But we can thwart Satan's efforts. In the moment that the adversary suggests to us evil, unkind thoughts, we can choose not to accept them—not to respond to our spouse in an unkind, out-of-control way. We can choose instead to respond with love and charity.

As my husband and I strive to develop the celestial attributes within ourselves and the celestial potential in



N A M A R R I A G E S T E P S



our marriage, we try to abide by seven gospel-centered truths that help us choose righteous responses.

1 We have a clear goal in mind.

We visualize ourselves one day standing together in the eternities as husband and wife. Whenever we encounter a challenge with regard to our children, we try to remember that the goal of building a celestial marriage and gaining eternal life is the most important, meaningful part of life together on this earth.

2 We try to remember that our Heavenly Father must be included in our partnership.

No matter how much effort we spend, without Him we will always fall short.

We sustain and nourish our marriage when we pray together as husband and wife, ask for His help, and express love for one another to Him.

ILLUSTRATED BY DILLEN MARSH

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS



"The secret of a happy marriage is to serve God and each other.

The goal of marriage is unity and oneness, as well as self-development. Paradoxically, the more we serve one another, the greater is our spiritual and emotional growth."

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), "Fundamentals of Enduring Family Relationships," *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 60.

3 We acknowledge the reality that Satan is our enemy.

We have come to realize that we must be on constant lookout for his sabotage. There is no event or no failing he would not exploit to weaken and overcome us.

4 When my husband and I come to a tough moment, I choose to remember that he is my best friend.

I remind myself, "He would not purposely do anything to hurt me." He takes the same attitude toward me. This empowers us to be in control of our thoughts and responses, and it takes control from our enemy.

5 We remember that we are growing together toward perfection.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "An ideal marriage is a true partnership between two imperfect people, each striving to complement the other, to keep the commandments, and to do the will of the Lord" ("Our Sacred Duty to Honor Women," *Ensign*, May 1999, 39). My husband and I try to remember that each of us is imperfect. Much of the pressure in our relationship is released when we both allow for the other's shortcomings.

6 We accept the reality that differences of opinion occur, even in the best marriages.

Respecting the opinion of one's spouse honors and builds that individual. Elder Nelson mentions "striving to complement" each other. Complement, spelled with an *e*, not an *i*, means to complete or make perfect, not to be exactly alike. Two people who are not exactly alike in thought can still build a harmonious, enduring marriage. Recently, as my husband and I witnessed a temple sealing, we were reminded by the sealer's counsel that it is more important to be loving than to be right.



7 Honest but charitable communication is essential to a solid marriage.

Dwelling on negative thoughts about a spouse or about wrongs inflicted fosters unhappiness, damages friendship, and can eventually lead to divorce. Instead, each spouse must feel safe and free to openly and honestly express thoughts and feelings. My husband and I have found that the sooner our concerns are expressed to one another, the sooner harmony can be restored to our marriage.

Practicing these seven principles can help shield us from the adversary's attacks. There are times when

Satan wins a battle in the homes of married couples. But as we align our hearts and our actions with eternal truths, we can win the war. □

Janette K. Gibbons is a member of the Gilbert Sixth Ward, Gilbert Arizona Highland Stake.

Gospel topics: marriage, love, patience, forgiveness

More on this topic: Carin Lund, "Four Principles of a Joyous Marriage," Ensign, Aug. 2000, 24; Marlin K. Jensen, "A Union of Love and Understanding," Ensign, Oct. 1994, 47; N. Eldon Tanner, "Celestial Marriages and Eternal Families," Ensign, May 1980, 15.

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LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

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

1. Do I sometimes blame or get caught up in negative thinking? For example, do I ever blame my spouse in my heart for something that was really no one's fault?
2. Do I truly value my spouse's differences and recognize the ways they help strengthen our marriage?
3. What things are happening in our marriage that are not based on righteous, eternal principles?
4. What can my spouse and I do to build a marriage relationship that will help us look forward to continuing it after this life?

ON THE RESPONSIBLE SELF

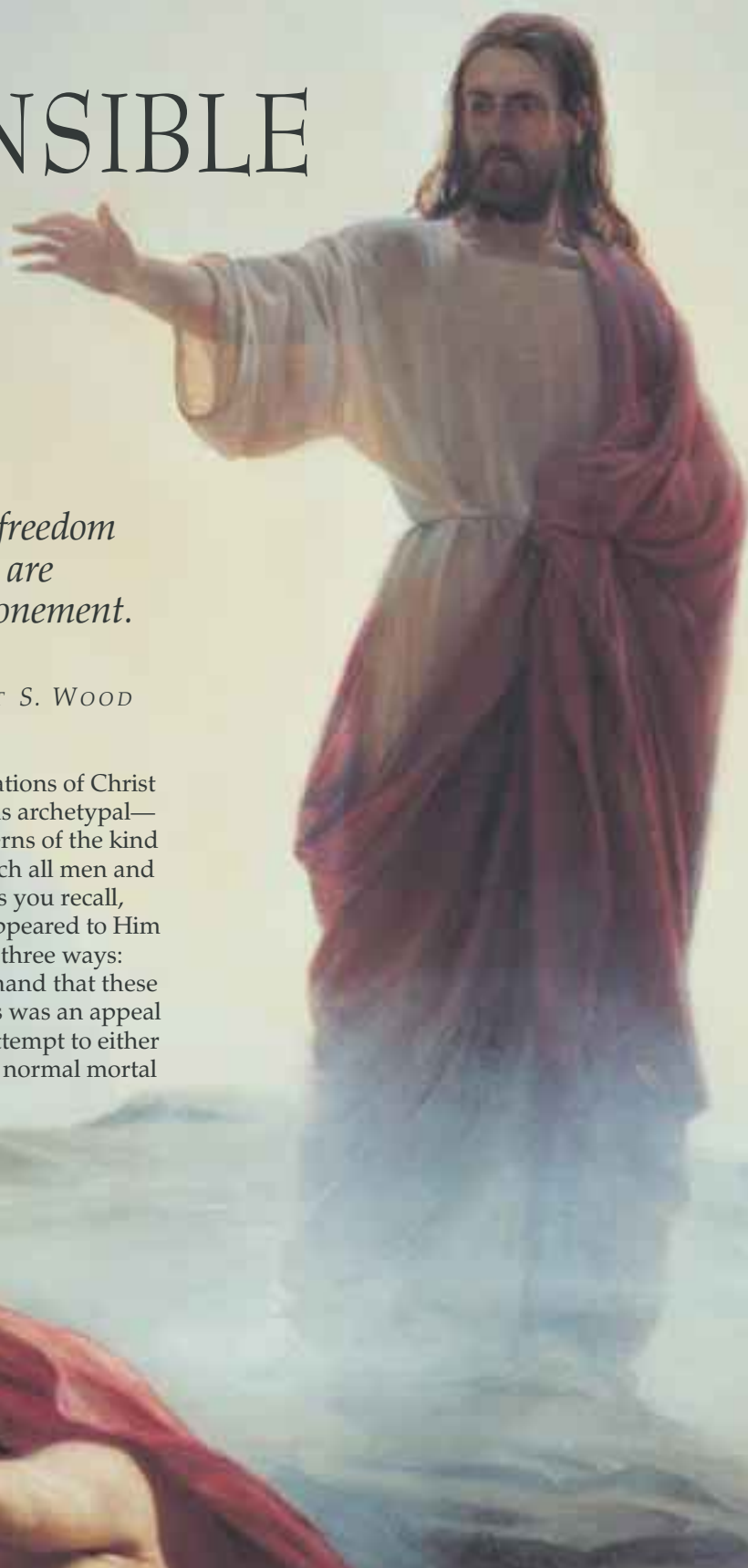
The concepts of individual freedom and personal responsibility are at the very center of the Atonement.



BY ELDER ROBERT S. WOOD
Of the Seventy

The three temptations of Christ are often seen as archetypal—models or patterns of the kind of temptations to which all men and women are subject. As you recall, after the Savior fasted 40 days, Satan appeared to Him in the wilderness and beguiled Him in three ways:

1. “If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread” (Matt. 4:3). This was an appeal to physical needs and desires and an attempt to either give undue importance to or pervert a normal mortal



GET THEE HENCE, SATAN; BY CARL HEINRICH BLOCH, DET NATIONALHISTORISKE MUSEUM PÅ FREDERIKSBORG, HILLERØD

requirement. And hence Jesus' answer: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:5).

2. "Then Jesus was taken up into the holy city, and the Spirit setteth him on the pinnacle of the temple;

"Then the devil came unto him and said, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone" (JST, Matt. 4:5–6). It is this temptation that we will discuss below.

3. "Jesus was in the Spirit, and it taketh him into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

"And the devil came unto him again, and said, All these things will I give unto thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (JST, Matt. 4:8–9). This was an appeal to greed and the desire for power, the requirement for which was to serve the devil. Thus Jesus' reply: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10).

Perhaps the symbolic nature of the second temptation is the least apparent of the three. But on reflection, this temptation points to a tendency to which we all are subject—the tendency to desire some miraculous delivery from the consequences of our actions; to be borne up, if you will, by angels or divine providence, with little effort on our part.

Why is such a tendency harmful? Why is it crucial that we accept responsibility for our actions? And how should our understanding of our personal responsibility affect our behavior?

BEING FREE REQUIRES BEING RESPONSIBLE

Ancient Greek dramatists had a device they used when the characters in their dramas were trapped in a complex web of dilemmas, largely of their own making—the *deus ex machina*. This was a machine in which actors portraying the gods would suddenly be lowered on the scene to save the mortal characters from the consequences of their own actions.

Today many people manifest the desire for such a rescue in small and large ways: the student who, having failed to study during the term, prays for assistance in an examination; the teacher who opens a

lesson by saying that, having made no preparations, he or she intends to rely on the Spirit; the individual who, having abused his or her body through lack of exercise and violation of the Lord's law of health, expects to be delivered, sometimes through priesthood administration, from the ravages of self-induced ill health; the drunken or reckless driver who prays for a "second chance"; the individual who, having violated the commands of God or rules of society, expects

mercy to utterly suppress the requirements of justice.

The psychologist Erich Fromm called the wish to escape the consequences of one's actions a desire to escape from freedom. For being free requires being responsible. The very word *freedom* connotes the ability to judge rationally between alternatives and the willingness to accept the consequences of one's decisions.

The prophet Lehi, in his counsel to his son Jacob, stressed that life poses real alternatives with different consequences (see 2 Ne. 2). Adherence to divine commandments will protect us from those consequences that are most damaging to our quest for sanctification and exaltation. If we abide strictly by the commands of our Heavenly Father, we may not necessarily be protected from ad-

versity, but we will be protected from that which is most deadly—the weakening of our integrity, alienation from God, the surrender of our divine destiny as children of God, and the destruction of our soul. Consequently, when we disobey the commands of God and the counsels of the living prophets, we always pay a price. No rationalization, no excuse, no complaining will alter the consequences.

As Alma observed, "There is a law given, and a punishment affixed" (Alma 42:22). Moses preached the same doctrine: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. 30:19).

The Apostle Paul reiterated this doctrine of consequences:

"For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

". . . [But] the end of those things is death.

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.



Because the Savior redeemed us from the Fall of Adam, we are responsible for our choices.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:20–23).

The Lord in modern revelation has stated the matter in positive terms:

“There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

“And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (D&C 130:20–21).

FREEDOM AND THE ATONEMENT

God has paid us the ultimate compliment: He holds us responsible and respects us as free, rational beings. He has given us this freedom through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The concepts of individual freedom and personal responsibility are at the very center of the Atonement. As Lehi noted, the sacrifice of the Messiah removed from us the consequences of the Fall of Adam, which bound our bodies to death and our spirits to hell. Being redeemed from the Fall, we are “free forever, knowing good from evil; to act . . . and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day. . . . Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man” (2 Ne. 2:26–27). In the words of the second article of faith, “We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression.”

Note this great truth: once we have accepted responsibility for our own actions, the grace of God is extended to us. For freedom implies not only accountability but also the ability to repent (see D&C 20:71), and repentance, grounded upon faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, brings sanctification and holiness—the ability to transcend the consequences of our actions and to be restored as children of our Father in Heaven. Alma’s words to his wayward son Corianton reveal that only the “truly penitent” can return to Heavenly Father’s presence:

The Lord has commanded that we teach our children to use their agency wisely.

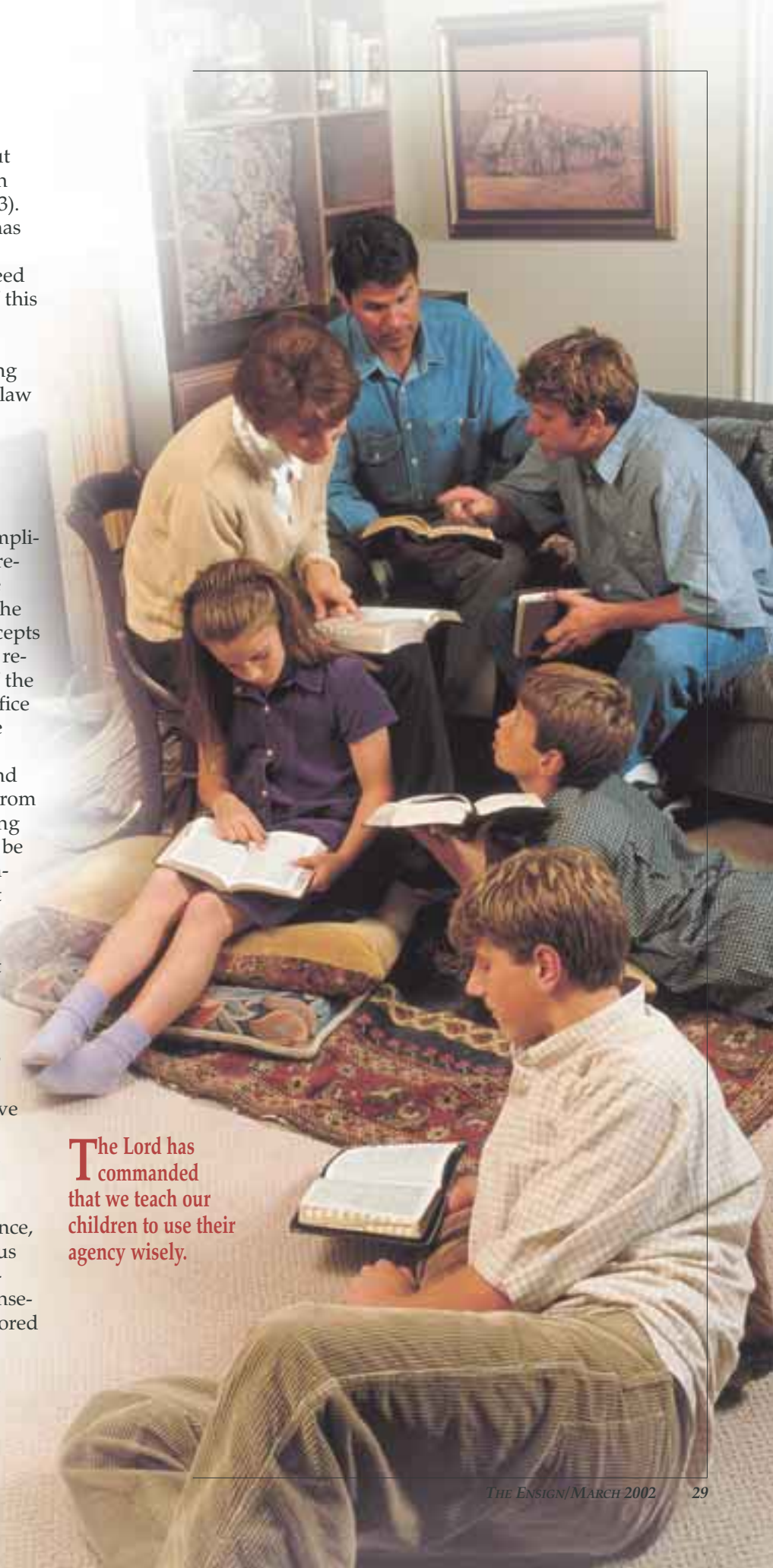


PHOTO BY STEVE BUNDERSON

“Mercy claimeth the penitent, and mercy cometh because of the atonement; and the atonement bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead; and the resurrection of the dead bringeth back men into the presence of God; and thus they are restored into his presence, to be judged according to their works. . . .

“ . . . Justice exerciseth all his demands, and also mercy claimeth all which is her own; and thus, none but the truly penitent are saved. . . .

“Therefore, O my son, whosoever will come may come and partake of the waters of life freely; and whosoever will not come the same is not compelled to come; but in the last day it shall be restored unto him according to his deeds” (Alma 42:23–24, 27).

TEACHING OTHERS TO BE RESPONSIBLE

The Lord has commanded as a matter of urgency that we prepare our children for a free, responsible life by teaching them “the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, . . . to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord” (D&C 68:25, 28). If we fail to do so, the Lord declares, the sin will be upon our heads (see D&C 68:25).

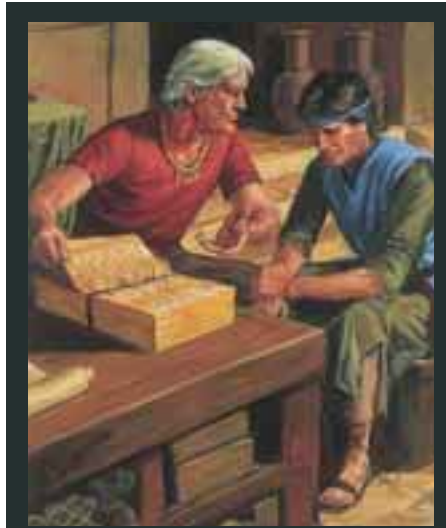
As with children, so it is, in a sense, with our dealings with all people. We must not deny people their responsibility. We have discovered in society as a whole, and often in our interpersonal relationships as well, that excusing someone because of all the things of which he or she has been deprived—social acceptance, a healthy home life, and so on—often gives license for further harmful behavior. Yet responsibility arises not only from favorable conditions. The Light of Christ, with which every man and woman is born, can shine through the most horrendous circumstances, but only if we persistently educate and communicate the idea of accountability. Without such a sense, there is no freedom, and if there is no freedom, there will ultimately be no fulfillment and no happiness.

BE ENGAGED IN THE WORLD

After Alma taught Corianton that he must accept responsibility for his personal thoughts and acts, Alma

turned Corianton’s vision outward: “And now, O my son, ye are called of God to preach the word unto this people . . . [to] bring souls unto repentance, that the great plan of mercy may have claim upon them” (Alma 42:31). Like Corianton, we bear responsibility not only for our own acts but also for those conditions in society that we can reasonably influence.

There is a fairy tale about a king who offered the hand of his daughter in marriage to the young man



Like Alma’s son Corianton, we each have the responsibility to try to influence society in positive ways.

who would do or create the most extraordinary, unbelievable thing. Young men from all over the kingdom brought to the royal city marvelous works of mind and hand and tremendous demonstrations of physical agility. Finally, one young man created a tremendous clock that not only told the minutes, hours, days, months, and years, but also had carved within it the figures of the great poets, philosophers, and prophets of history, who on the appointed hours expounded the wisdom of the ages. The people exclaimed, “What an unbelievable thing!” But then another young man appeared on the scene who, sledgehammer in hand, began to destroy the masterpiece. Again the people exclaimed—this time in horror—“Why, *this* is the most unbelievable thing we’ve seen!” And so it appeared that the king was to be compelled to hand

his daughter over to the ruffian. But, this being a fairy tale, suddenly all the stone figures reassembled, became flesh, and drove the young man from the town.

When I first read this tale to one of my daughters, she asked, “What was everyone doing while the young man was wrecking the clock?” A very sensible question! For too many, responsibility seems to end with hand-wringing and exclamations of dismay. Yet talk without action accomplishes little. We need to be vigorously engaged in the world. If our schools are inadequate or destructive of moral values, we must work with fellow members of the community to bring about change. If our neighborhoods are unsafe or unhealthy, we must join with the civic-minded to devise solutions. If our cities and towns are polluted, not only with noxious gases but soul-destroying addictions and smut, we must labor to find legitimate ways to eliminate such filth while respecting freedom of conscience.

But what can one man or woman or a handful of Latter-day Saints accomplish? Much. The dynamics of history are driven, on the one hand, by the few who are engaged, and on the other hand, by the many

who are apathetic. If we are not among the few engaged, we are, despite our concerns and voices of alarm, among the apathetic. May it never be said of us, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16).

We are among the most blessed people in all of history. There is no place for complaining, no excuse for inaction, no "escape from freedom." Being so richly blessed, we have the responsibility to be a blessing to others, to our nation, to the world. When we stand at the great judgment bar of Jehovah, He may ask: Did we honor our personal responsibility? Did we bear the burdens of our neighbors? Did we heal? Did we comfort? Did we bring peace? Did we instill virtue? Did we spend ourselves in the service and uplift of mankind? May we at that day be able to

We need to be actively engaged in serving others and improving the world around us.

answer in the affirmative and then hear the words pronounced, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter into my rest." □

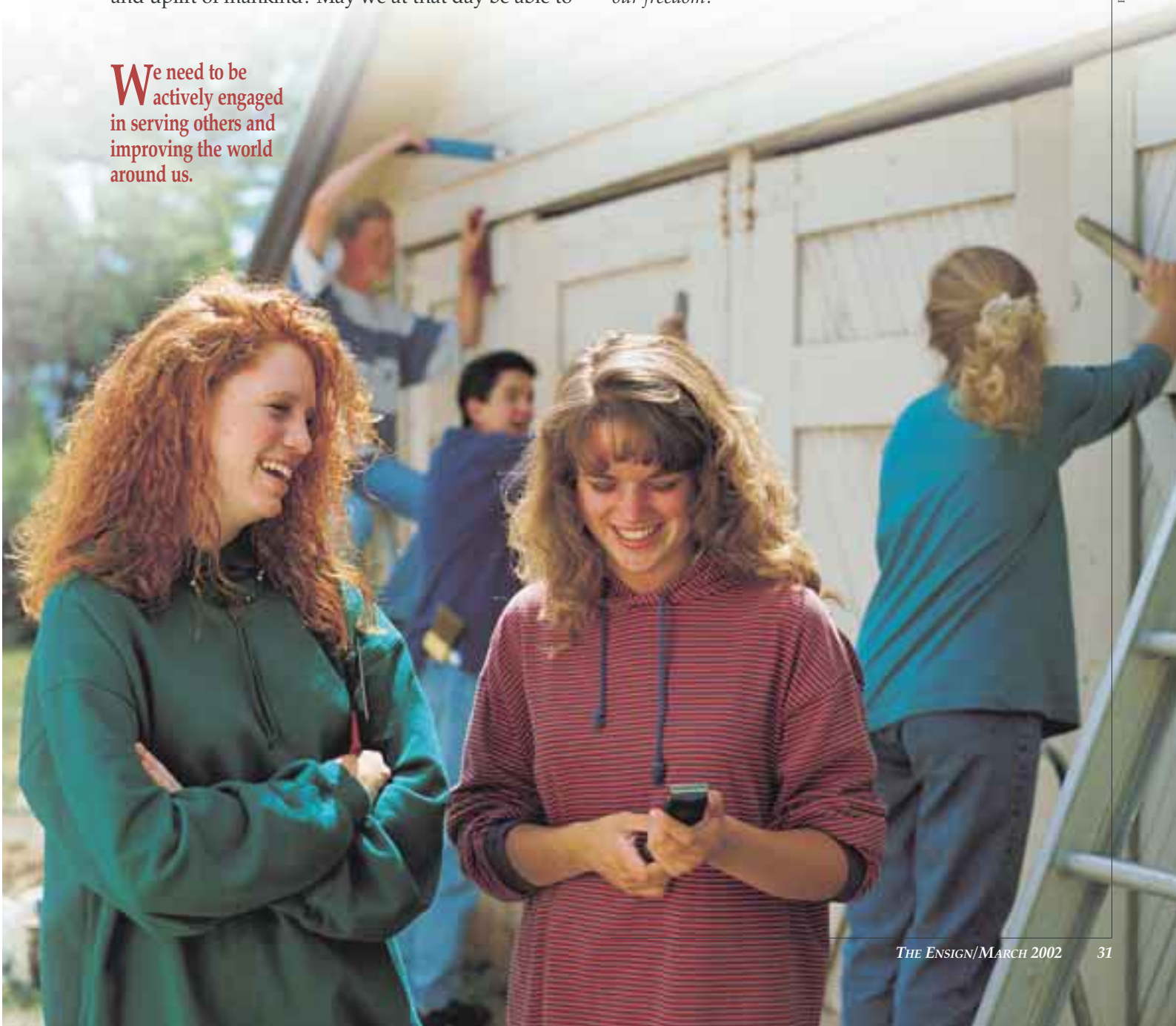
Gospel topics: responsibility, agency, Atonement, repentance

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

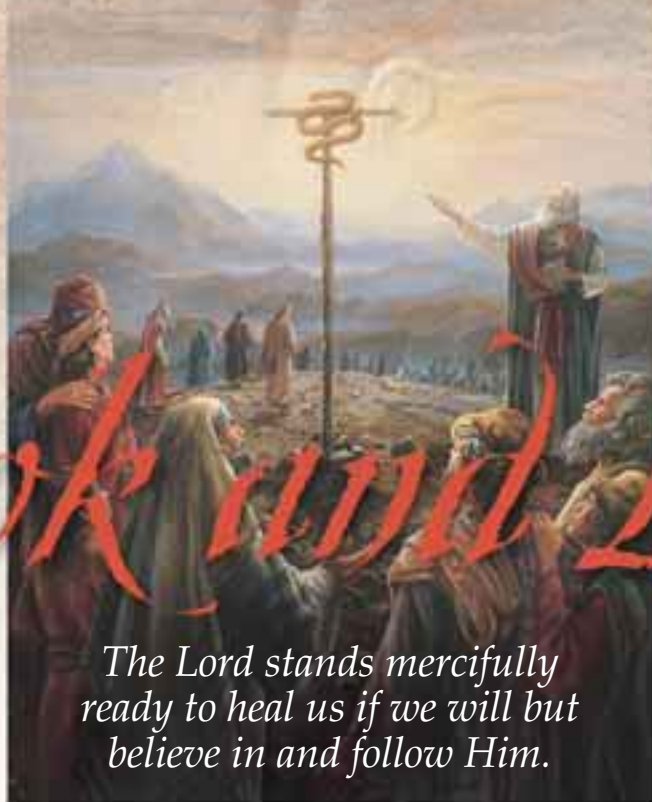
Most Ensign articles can be used for family home evening discussions. The following questions are for that purpose or for personal reflection:

- 1. How has an attitude of blame affected society at large? How can it affect our interpersonal relationships?*
- 2. How are the concepts of individual freedom and personal responsibility related to the Atonement?*
- 3. How does obeying the commandments help preserve our freedom?*

PHOTO BY CRAIG DIMOND



Look and Live



The Lord stands mercifully ready to heal us if we will but believe in and follow Him.

that anyone who “doeth ought presumptuously [intentionally sins] . . . shall be cut off from among the

BY ELDER
GLEN O. JENSON
Area Authority Seventy



The Lord does not easily give up on us. He wants us to come to Him even when we have rejected Him. Such was the case with the ancient children of Israel.

With a firm decree, the Lord consigned the Israelites to 40 years in the wilderness for their unbelief (see Num. 14:33). He did not, however, abandon them. He promised to preserve and bring all their “little ones” under age 20 into the promised land (see Num. 14:29–31). He then proceeded to guide them through a series of difficult yet valuable experiences to help them develop faith in Jesus Christ. As with the ancient children of Israel in the wilderness, it is often in the most difficult times of our lives that we finally sense the depth of the Lord’s love and His anxious desire to forgive and heal us (see D&C 95:1).

THE FIRST 39 YEARS

The Israelite nation numbered in the hundreds of thousands, and their animals would have numbered in the millions! It is therefore easy to see why the nations located along their path did not want them on their land. Some of these nations soon came upon them, violently driving them from the border of the precious and fertile promised land. Yet the Lord comforted them (see Num. 15:2) and gave them instructions on how to be forgiven of unintentional sins (see Num. 15:22–26). But He sternly warned them

people” (Num. 15:30). This point was soon dramatically emphasized when the Lord commanded that a man be put to death for willfully breaking the Sabbath (see Num. 15:32–36). The Lord then pled with them to “remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them” (Num. 15:39).

Despite these warnings, a Levite priest named Korah, two men from the tribe of Reuben, and 250 other leaders rebelled, openly reviling against Moses and Aaron. The Lord therefore kept His word, and a great destruction came upon the camp: Korah and his followers were swallowed up by an earthquake, fire consumed the 250 leaders, and a plague killed 14,700 others who had threatened Moses (see Num. 16).

In the midst of what must have been a time of great sadness, the Lord sought to strengthen the Israelites’ faith by showing them a marvelous and instructive miracle. He asked that 12 “rods” or staffs, one for each tribe, be placed inside the tabernacle (see Num. 17:2, 4). The Lord then promised to make one of these dead poles sprout blossoms, thereby signifying which tribe was accepted of Him to lead the people.

The next day when Moses displayed the staffs before the people, only Aaron’s had sprouted (see Num. 17:8). The people confessed their sins and agreed to sustain Moses, Aaron, and the tribe of Levi as their leaders. They acknowledged with great resignation, “Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish” (Num. 17:12). They now knew that the Lord’s will would be done—namely, no one from the older generation would enter the promised land.



Like ancient Israel in the wilderness, we have experiences that point us to the Lord as the only source for healing and salvation.

By the 40th year a new generation of Israelites had emerged, and once again the camp of Israel was on the move toward the promised land.¹ The Canaanites attacked them and captured some, but this time the Israelites turned to the Lord for help and gained a complete victory (see Num. 21:1–3). When the Amorites and the king of Bashan came to battle against them, the Lord again vanquished their enemies (see Num. 21:21–35).

FIERY FLYING SERPENTS

In the midst of these momentous victories, Moses asked the king of Edom for permission to travel through the land. When he refused, the people had to detour, making their journey more difficult (see Num. 20:14–21). “The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way” (Num. 21:4), and once again they murmured against the Lord and Moses. So “the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people” (Num. 21:6). Recognizing their sin, the people pled with Moses to petition the Lord for deliverance. Rather than simply taking the serpents away, the Lord chose to teach His people about faith and salvation through Christ. He instructed Moses to fashion a serpent of brass and mount it on a tall pole, and “if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived” (Num. 21:9).

The prophet Nephi referred to these snakes as “fiery flying serpents” (1 Ne. 17:41). What kind of a serpent was it? The Hebrew word for *fiery* means “burning,” a probable reference to the burning pain of the bite. What does it mean for a serpent to fly? Possible explanations include the lightning speed with which a snake can strike and the propensity for some snakes to actually leap through the air at their victims. One snake that fits this general description and lives in the areas inhabited by the Israelites thousands of years ago is the saw-scale viper. Its venom causes death by internal bleeding over several days.²

Three Book of Mormon prophets used this story in their efforts to persuade their people to repent and believe in Christ. Nephi, son of Lehi, told his brothers that the Lord sent the serpents among the people to soften their hearts and that the only “labor which they had to perform was to look” (1 Ne. 17:41). Nephi also emphasized that while the labor was simple and easy, many still perished. The prophet Alma added several insights into this story: (1) many Israelites “did look and live” (Alma 33:19); (2) many would not even look because they did not believe, so they died; (3) among those who did look and were healed, some did not understand what the Lord was trying to teach them (see Alma 33:20). Nephi, son of Helaman, explained the symbolism of the brass serpent when he testified: “As he [Moses] lifted up the brazen serpent in the

wilderness, even so shall he [the Messiah] be lifted up. . . . And as many as should look upon the Son of God with faith, having a contrite spirit, might live, even unto that life which is eternal” (Hel. 8:14–15).

The Savior likened Himself to the serpent of brass: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14–15).

LOOK AND LIVE

Like ancient Israel in the wilderness, we have experiences during our mortal lives that point us to the Lord as the only source for healing and salvation. Sometimes He “straitens” us (see 1 Ne. 17:41), hoping to soften our hearts. But in each difficult situation, He stands ready mercifully to heal us if we will but believe in Him. Elder Carlos E. Asay (1926–99) of the Seventy said, “We, like Israel of old, must rivet our eyes and minds upon the cross of Christ if we hope to gain eternal life. . . . Our looks must not be allowed to wander across the way or to become fixed upon the perishable things of the world. The eye, ‘the light of the body’ (Matt. 6:22), must be trained to look upward. We must look to God and live!”³

We show our desire to be healed by remembering Him always and obeying His commandments. It was not the brazen serpent that brought healing; it was faith in Jehovah and obedience to His words. The prophet Alma urged his son Helaman: “Do not let us be slothful because of the easiness of the way. . . . The way is prepared, and if we will look we may live forever” (Alma 37:46). Let us not let the simpleness of the path lead us to be slothful or slow to keep the commandments of God. The Savior’s invitation is, “Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live” (3 Ne. 15:9). □

Elder Glen O. Jenson is an Area Authority Seventy serving in the Utah North Area.

Gospel topics: *Old Testament, Moses, adversity, healing, Jesus Christ*

More on this topic: *See Name Withheld, “Being Clean Again,” Ensign, Sept. 1996, 20–22; A. Theodore Tuttle, “Developing Faith,” Ensign, Nov. 1986, 72–73; Ernel J. Morton, “I Have a Question,” Ensign, Sept. 1983, 49.*

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NOTES

1. Numbers 20:1 states that the Israelites camped at Kadesh in the first month, but it does not mention the year. However, since Aaron died in the 40th year and 5th month after the children of Israel left Egypt (see Num. 33:38), while they were camped at Kadesh (see Num. 20:22–29), we may conclude that the events of Numbers 20–21 occurred during the last year before the Israelites entered the promised land.

2. See Alan E. Leviton and others, *Handbook to Middle East Amphibians and Reptiles* (1992), 110–14; Jürg Meier and Julian White, *Handbook of Clinical Toxicology of Animal Venoms and Poisons* (1995), 467. Conclusions based on research done by Ronald P. Millett, Park Fifth Ward, Orem Park Stake.

3. “Look to God and Live,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 54.



The 12 Spies

BY S. MICHAEL WILCOX

This Old Testament story reminds us to look beyond the walls in front of us and see the promised vineyards of the Lord ready to harvest.

Among all the philosophies one could choose to follow in life, the choice between two basic but opposing approaches—faith versus fear—influences our lives more markedly than any other (see Mark 4:40). These approaches are as old as mankind and are amply found in the scriptures. Perhaps the best example can be found in the story of the spies Moses sent into Canaan after the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt.

THE REPORT

Moses and the children of Israel traveled from Mount Sinai in hopes of repossessing the land promised to them according to the divine covenants made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see Ex. 3:16–17; 33:1–3). Before entering that land, the Lord told

Moses to send some men to explore the land of Canaan. Moses chose 12 men, one from each tribe, “every one a ruler among them,” into the land (Num. 13:2). They searched it from the south to the north and back again, a distance of about 250 miles each way, for 40 days. On their way back to camp they stopped by the brook Eshcol near the village of Hebron and cut down “a branch with one cluster of grapes” (Num. 13:23). Two of the men hoisted it upon a pole and carried it between them. The size of the grape cluster was an indication of the goodness of the land. They also gathered pomegranates and figs to show the people.

Returning to the people, all 12 men reported assuredly to the children of Israel that “the land . . . floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it” (Num. 13:27). However, 10 of the 12 spies also fearfully

reported that “the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great. . . . We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we” (Num. 13:28, 31). A spontaneous murmur echoed through the camp.

Two of the spies, Caleb—from the tribe of Judah, and Joshua, from the tribe of Ephraim—went forward to calm the people. They confirmed the fruitfulness of the land but disagreed that it could not be conquered. “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it,” Caleb pled (Num. 13:30). “Not so,” replied the 10 other spies as they continued to spread the frightening report among the people. “We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight,” they said (Num. 13:33).

THE PROVOCATION

The people had a choice. Would they direct their attention to the large cluster of grapes and the hope of future harvests in the land the Lord had promised them, or would they focus on the words of the 10 faithless leaders about the height of the walls and the difficulties they might face in conquering the land? The people mourned and wept that night. They talked of returning to Egypt and rebelling against Moses. In vain, Caleb and Joshua tried to kindle some faith in their hearts by assuring them, “If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it us. . . . Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land. . . . The Lord is with us: fear them not” (Num 14:8–9). The people chose fear instead of faith, taking up stones to kill Caleb and Joshua. Suddenly the glory of the Lord appeared before them in the camp.

This moment in Old Testament history is what some prophets have called “the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness” (Heb. 3:8). These prophets have used the story of what happened to the children of Israel at this point in their history to teach their people the importance of repenting before it is too late (see Jacob 1:7–8; Alma 12:36–37).

The Lord then asked Moses, “How long will this people provoke me?” (Num. 14:11), whereupon Moses, in his role as a mediator, and as a similitude of the Savior, pled with the Lord for his people, “Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people” (Num. 14:19).

The Lord knew the children of Israel did not have the faith necessary to claim their inheritance in the promised land and took them at their word. They had said that it would be better to die in the wilderness than to attempt such a difficult task of conquering the land (see Num. 14:2). As a result, the Lord decreed that the people would sojourn in the wilderness until all those over age 20 who had come out of Egypt had

died. The Lord declared He would lead a new generation of Israelites into the land (see Num. 14:23–35). Thus began their 40 years of life in the desert.

GRAPE GATHERERS OR WALL WATCHERS

There are times when we may hear two conflicting reports of what lies before us in life. We have to decide whether to focus on the difficulties in obeying a certain commandment of the Lord or to focus on the “fruits,” remembering the promises He extends to those who trust in Him. Whether we are paying tithing, accepting a Church calling, or dealing with personal challenges in our families, at work, or obtaining an education, we simply must not let the “height of the walls” and the power of opposing forces make us feel “as grasshoppers” (Num. 13:33). The Lord will help us conquer our fears, surmount our obstacles, and enjoy the blessings of faithfulness to His gospel. If we will keep our eyes on the harvest, not on the obstacles before us, we become grape gatherers instead of wall watchers.

President Gordon B. Hinckley is a latter-day example of a grape gatherer. He has said: “We see some around us who are indifferent concerning the future of this work, . . . who speak of limitations, who express fears. . . .

If we will keep our eyes on the harvest, not on the obstacles before us, we will become grape gatherers instead of wall watchers.

With doubt concerning its past, they have no vision concerning its future. . . . I invite every one of you, wherever you may be as members of this church, to stand on your feet and with a song in your heart move forward, living the gospel, loving the Lord, and building the kingdom."¹

Of all the people in the older generation of Israelites, only Caleb and Joshua lived to taste the sweetness of the grapes of the land and the red richness of the pomegranates. How much sweeter the fruits of the promised land must have been to them, for they had known the challenges and had overcome

them! The example of the two faithful spies reminds us to lift our eyes over the walls before us and see the vineyards and orchards of the Lord's promises ready to be harvested. □

S. Michael Wilcox is a member of the Draper 16th Ward, Draper Utah Stake.

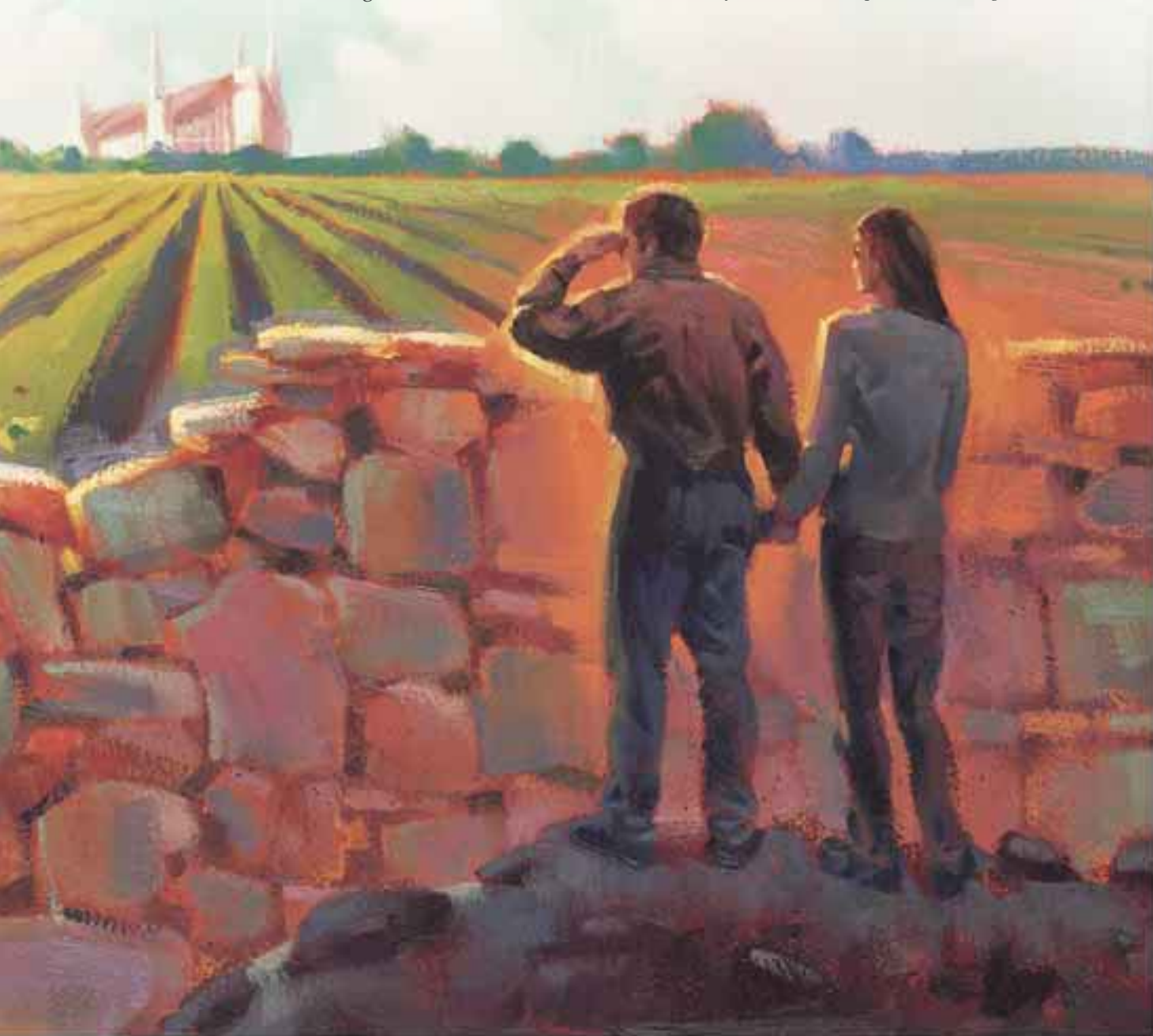
Gospel topics: *Old Testament, faith, fear*

More on this topic: *See Spencer W. Kimball, "Give Me This Mountain," Ensign, Nov. 1979, 78–79; Edward J. Brandt, "Journeys and Events in the Life of Moses," Ensign, Oct. 1973, 36–45.*

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NOTE

1. "Stay the Course—Keep the Faith," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 71–72.



AN INDISPENSABLE

Foundation

BY GEORGE A. HORTON JR.

The Old Testament is like a root system that strengthens our understanding of all other scripture.

Once interviewed several students from China who were studying on one of the Church's university campuses. They were very bright, and their English was excellent; several had bachelor's degrees. As a part of their course work they were required to take a Book of Mormon class, but after two weeks they were experiencing problems. The religion department chairman asked me to find out what was wrong.

I called the students together. Speaking for the group, one said, "We do not understand what the teacher is talking about."

"Could you give me some examples?" I asked.

He replied, "Of course. Who is Adam? What is the Fall? Who is Noah? What is the Flood? Who is Abraham? What is a covenant? Who is Jehovah? What is the house of Israel? What are Gentiles? What is the law of Moses?"

It became clear to me that the Old Testament is like the roots of a great scriptural tree, and one needs to know about the roots to comprehend the tree and its branches.

THE BOOK OF MORMON: ROOTED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

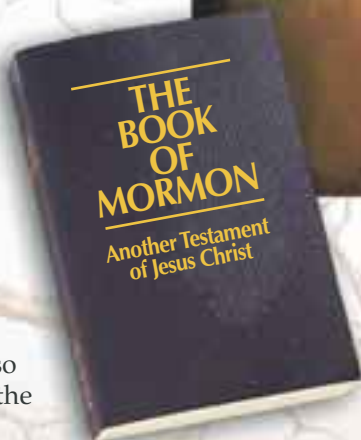
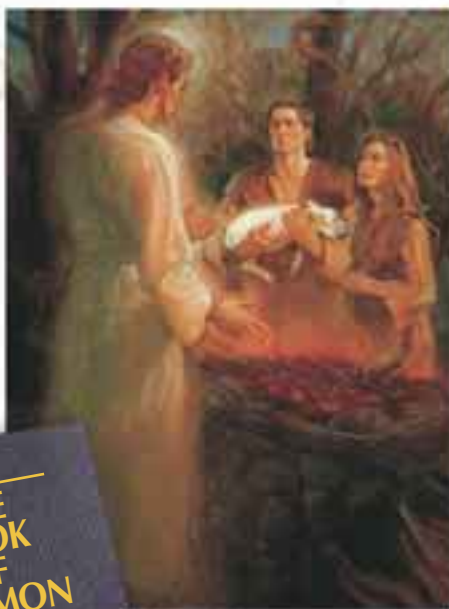
A primary reason the Old Testament is so closely connected to the Book of Mormon is the plates of brass. These plates contained "the five books of Moses . . . and also a record of the Jews from the beginning, even down" to

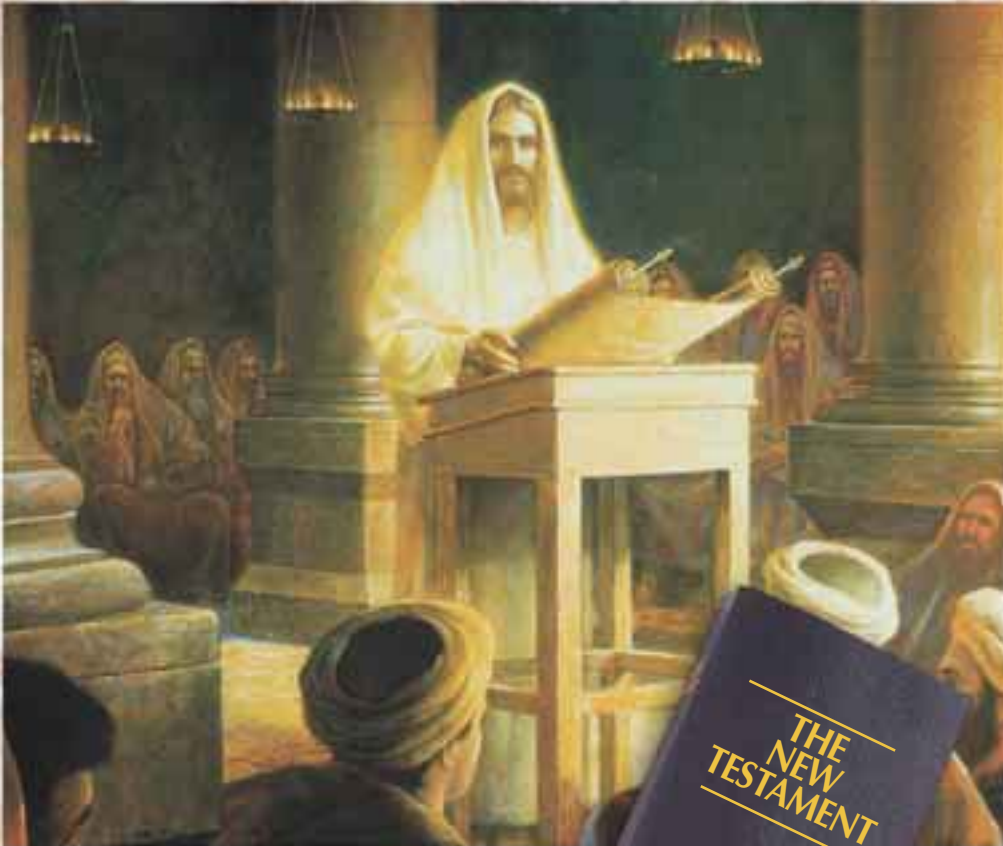
the time of Lehi and his family; they also contained "the prophecies of the holy prophets, from the beginning," including many prophecies of Jeremiah, who lived in the days of Lehi (1 Ne. 5:11–13). They were sacred scriptures used by the prophets of ancient America, who relied on and quoted from them to teach the gospel to their peoples. Some writings on the brass plates were even copied onto the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. It is little wonder, then, that the Book of Mormon has its roots in the Old Testament.

Another reason is that until the coming of the resurrected Christ, the descendants of Lehi and Mulek in ancient America lived the law of Moses, an essentially Old Testament law. The prophet Abinadi taught that the law of Moses was "a law of performances and of ordinances, a law which they were to observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him" (Mosiah 13:30). The prophet Nephi said, "Notwithstanding we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled" (2 Ne. 25:24). Without a background

in the Old Testament, one would wonder, "What is the law of Moses?" when reading these passages. Book of Mormon writers did not take space on their plates to explain much about this law. They knew we would have the "record of the Jews"—the Old Testament.

A third reason the Old Testament is so closely connected to the Book of Mormon is that both are records





of the scattering and gathering of the house of Israel. Like an ancient olive tree, the Old Testament provides us with roots, with the Lord Jesus Christ (Jehovah) as the taproot, the main source of life. We learn much in the Old Testament about the “roots” of the posterity of Adam down to Abraham, from whom sprang the house of Israel. How could anyone understand the many references in the Book of Mormon to what has and will happen to the house of Israel without a knowledge of its history from the Old Testament?

A fourth reason the two books are so closely connected is that many Book of Mormon teachings have their source in the people, events, and prophecies of the Old Testament. For example, Lehi taught his family, “All mankind were in a lost and . . . fallen state, and ever would be save they should rely on this Redeemer” (1 Ne. 10:6). What is a “lost and fallen state”? How did mankind get there? Unless we know the story of Adam and Eve, we cannot answer these questions. And what was the Book of Mormon’s Antionah referring to when he asked Alma, “What does the scripture mean, which saith that God placed cherubim and a flaming sword on the east of the garden of Eden, lest our first parents should enter and partake of the fruit of the tree of

life, and live forever?” (Alma 12:21). A person who has read the Old Testament knows that this comes from the book of Genesis (see Gen. 3:24).

THE NEW TESTAMENT: ROOTED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The New Testament is actually more integrally related to the Old Testament than even the Book of Mormon. It was written mainly to

Jewish readers, an audience that would have been well versed in the five books of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms, or “writings.” The writers of the New Testament assumed their readers had studied the Old Testament. They primarily viewed the New Testament as the continuation of the story of the house of Israel from where it had ended in the Old Testament, at their return from captivity. They taught that the “Old Covenant” made on Mount Sinai was fulfilled by the “New Covenant” brought to pass in Gethsemane and Calvary. The Lord said: “I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer. 31:31, 33).

We cannot get beyond the first verse of the New Testament without being made aware of the integral relationship between these two testaments: “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt. 1:1). When there were 28 generations between Jesus and David, why does the writer choose to single out David? Why does the same verse say that David is the son of Abraham when there were 14 generations between David and Abraham? And why is Abraham important? Answers to these questions can be found in

Old Testament prophecy, as clarified by modern revelation, that Jesus Christ would be the central figure in the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham (see 3 Ne. 20:25–26; Abr. 2:11). Through the ministry of Abraham’s posterity would come the priesthood, the gospel, and the covenants and blessings of eternal life. And through David came the royal line of kings (see 2 Sam. 7:16), one of whom was the King of Kings, the holy Messiah, Jesus Christ (see Gen. 49:10).

A knowledge of countless New Testament passages depends on an understanding of the law of Moses. Consider the following from the Apostle Paul:

“Now we know what things soever the law [of Moses] saith, it saith to them who are under the law. . . . Therefore by the deeds of the law [of Moses] there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets” (Rom. 3:19–21).

Paul wanted his Jewish Christian associates to understand that no matter how well a person kept the law of Moses it could not save a person, for no one can keep it perfectly. Therefore, they must look to “the righteousness of God,” or Jesus Christ, of whom the law of Moses testifies. If one understands the

nature of the law of Moses, especially as it was being taught in the Apostle Paul’s day, this passage makes sense.

Matthew records: “A woman of Canaan . . . cried . . . , saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. . . . But he [Jesus] answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15:22, 24). The Old Testament helps us understand who the “lost sheep” are. In Jesus’ day, they were the Jews, or those of the house of Israel who had returned to Jerusalem from captivity in Babylon (see Jer. 29:10–14).

THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS: ROOTED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Much of what has been explained here about why the Book of Mormon and New Testament are rooted in the Old Testament is also true for the Doctrine and

Covenants. A familiarity with the Old Testament is helpful for the reader of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Consider the following passages:

“Behold, this is the blessing of the everlasting God upon the tribes of Israel, and the richer blessing upon the head of Ephraim and his fellows” (D&C 133:34). The Doctrine and Covenants is a record of modern-day Ephraim, and without knowing the Old Testament, how can we know who Ephraim was or understand the prophecies applicable to him?

The Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith: “Go ye, therefore, and do the works of Abraham” (D&C 132:32). What are the works of Abraham? We could not know without an Old Testament to reveal them.

At the Kirtland Temple dedication the Prophet Joseph prayed, “And if they shall smite this people thou wilt smite them; thou wilt fight for thy people as thou didst in the day of battle” (D&C 109:28). When did the Lord fight for His people and in what battle? Many examples



STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT



"We delight in the knowledge of the Lord that we find recorded in

the Old and New Testaments. We know that Jehovah of the Old Testament and Jesus of the New Testament are one and the same. We are grateful that this sacred record . . . has been preserved and passed to us to enlighten our minds and strengthen our spirits."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Christians in Belief and Action," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 71.

may be found in the Old Testament (see Ex. 14:13–14; Ex. 17:8–11; 2 Kgs. 19:32–37).

Further, many prophets of the Old Testament, such as Moses and Elijah, are integrally related to the restoration of priesthood authority and keys in this dispensation (see D&C 27:9–11; 84:6–16; 107:1–2; 110:11–14; 128:20).

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE: ROOTED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The book of Moses is the Joseph Smith Translation of part of the Old Testament. It corrects and adds to Genesis 1:1 to 6:13 and includes an introductory revelation to the book of Genesis. The book of Abraham is also an Old Testament–related book of scripture. Joseph Smith—Matthew is the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew 24 in the New Testament, yet it has strong ties to the Old Testament prophecy of Daniel regarding the abomination of desolation (see Bible Dictionary, 601). A significant part of Joseph Smith—History also relates to several Old Testament prophecies. When the angel Moroni came to the young prophet Joseph on 21–22 September 1823, what did he quote? Numerous passages from the Old Testament, including Deuteronomy 32; Psalms 100, 107, 144, and 146; Isaiah 1, 2, 4, 11, 29, and 43; Jeremiah 16, 30, 31, and 50; Joel 2; and Malachi 3 and 4.

THE SAVIOR SET THE PATTERN

Early in His mortal ministry, Jesus set a pattern for using the Old Testament. He frequently said, "It is written . . ." or "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time. . . ." After His Resurrection, Luke reported that Jesus used the Old Testament to teach two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus: "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures [the Old Testament] the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). To 11 of the Apostles in an upper room, He said, "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke

24:44). During His visit among the Nephites, Jesus pointedly admonished them to read the Old Testament writings of the prophet Isaiah, and He "expounded all the scriptures in one" (3 Ne. 23:14).

The Lord is our great Exemplar in the use of the Old Testament. He studied it, probably memorizing much of it as a boy. He quoted from it and lived by its teachings. He said to His contemporaries, "Search the scriptures [the Old Testament]; . . . they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

THE ROOT SYSTEM

The Old Testament is like the root system of a great scriptural tree, and it contains the genealogical roots of all the descendants of Adam. The Old Testament provides a powerful witness of the Creation, the Creator, the Fall of man, the need for the Atonement, the establishment of the Abrahamic covenant, and the divine destiny of the house of Israel, into which all who covenant with the Lord are to be placed. We will discover deeper meaning in all other standard works when we realize that they all receive strength from their thoroughly imbedded Old Testament roots. The scriptures are connected, and they stand together like a mighty tree of scriptural knowledge.

The Savior Jesus Christ is the great taproot, the major source of our strength in all scripture. The Old Testament is the "book of beginnings" for our mortal sojourn. The Lord wants us to know its message, learn its lessons, and live its precepts. It could rightfully be called "The First Testament of Jesus Christ," and for each of us it is *an indispensable foundation*. □

George A. Horton Jr. is a member of the Oak Hills Second Ward, Provo Utah Oak Hills Stake.

Gospel topics: *Old Testament, scripture study, Jesus Christ*

More on this topic: See Chris Conkling, "The Book That Built a Better World," *Ensign*, Jan. 1998, 7–11; Lynette H. Kelley, "Loving the Old Testament throughout My Life," *Ensign*, Jan. 1990, 15–16; Mary Hazen Johnston, "Learning to Love the Old Testament," *Ensign*, Apr. 1986, 56–57.

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SAINTS IN THE LAND OF The Long' W

In New Zealand, members draw strength from temple attendance, their increased recognition in the country, and the vibrant mix of cultures they share.

BY REBECCA M. TAYLOR
Assistant Editor

Evidence of God's hand is abundant in New Zealand—or *Aotearoa*, Maori for "Land of the Long White Cloud." The verdant landscape itself testifies of a divine Creator, from the miles of wind-swept beaches to the bush-covered hills and the rugged mountain peaks that stretch toward the sky. Indeed, the New Zealand national anthem is a prayer to God:

*God of nations, at Thy feet,
In the bonds of love we meet.
Hear our voices, we entreat;
God defend our free land. . . .*

Like so many other countries, however, New Zealand is increasingly following the trends of the world—including the trend away from organized religion. Yet numerous Latter-day Saints here, anchored with a long history in the country, are holding firmly to their faith, fortifying their testimonies through temple attendance, heightening awareness of the Church through public affairs efforts, and drawing strength from the unique blend of cultures that forms their membership.

FAITHFUL, STALWART MEMBERS

Latter-day Saint missionaries first came to New Zealand in October 1854. Converts were few until the 1880s, when missionary work commenced among the Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand. Many Maori felt a spiritual and cultural connection with the Church and believed the coming of the missionaries to

Allistair and Noeline Odgers find that their family's yearly trips to the temple help keep their testimonies strong. Background: Wainui Beach is on the east coast of the North Island.

White Cloud





BACKGROUND: PHOTO © PHOTODISC

be the fulfillment of Maori prophecy. Consequently, numerous Maori joined the Church, helping it establish a firm foothold in the country. Today, while a majority of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand are of Maori or other Polynesian ancestry, the Church is growing among those of many different ethnic backgrounds. And while most Latter-day Saints are first- or second-generation members, it is not uncommon to meet people whose history in the Church reaches back several generations.

Gloria Kelly's history has been intertwined with that of the Church for many years. A fourth-generation member, she was baptized in the Auckland Harbour on 8 March 1952 and was among the first students to attend the Church College of New Zealand, a Church-owned high school in Temple View near Hamilton. (The term *college* is often applied to high schools in New Zealand.) She vividly remembers the bustle of activity in Temple View as labor missionaries rushed to put the final touches on the college and on the gleaming new temple before its dedication in April 1958, and she was in the congregation when President David O. McKay (1873–1970) dedicated the sacred building. She also recalls the heady days of working with members of her close-knit branch to build a new meetinghouse—one of the first in the Auckland area. Now, there are 10 stakes and numerous meetinghouses in the region.

As she has seen the Church grow and progress, she has also observed her once-isolated country rush

Above: Gloria Kelly attended the New Zealand temple dedication in 1958. Background: New Zealand is renowned for its lush landscape. Far right: Lotomau and Makerita Fesolai and their children, members of the Christchurch stake, enjoy home evening.



to catch up with the rest of the world. Yet with the progress in New Zealand have come challenges. "When I first joined the Church, no one in New Zealand did anything on a Sunday besides go to church or spend time with their families," she says. "All the shops were closed. Now we've got Sunday shopping, rugby games, and so on."

Elder Lindsay Dil, an Area Authority Seventy in the Australia/New Zealand Area, says the country was religiously inclined until fairly recently. "A generation ago most people at least would go to Sunday School, so they had a religious foundation," he says. "There's been a marked change in the last 10 or 15 years, with a move away from the churches to being seekers of leisure."

Many factors have contributed to the growing secularization of the country. As in other developed countries, the increasing influence of television, movies, and the Internet has diverted attention away from religion. A ban on Sunday shopping was lifted just over a decade ago, leading people to flock to the stores rather than the churches. Working hours have



Wellington stake and director of the Wellington institute of religion, "What impresses me is that so many of the kids here in the Wellington area love the Lord and stay with Him all the way in spite of everything they're facing. They are wise enough to say the Lord comes first."

Twenty-year-old Sheree Saili is an example of one such vibrant young Church member. She joined the Church at age nine, together with other members of her family, and her Samoan-born father is now bishop of the Tawa Ward, Wellington stake.

Sheree points to the influence of her parents, youth leaders, and the institute program in helping



been increased, with a six-day workweek being common, leaving little time for other activities. In addition, the country is extremely sports-minded, and participation in athletics takes a sizeable portion of New Zealanders' time. In fact, many make the tongue-in-cheek remark that the national religion is rugby. "It's the Super Bowl almost every day of the year," says Elder Glen L. Rudd, a former member of the Seventy who has spent many years in the country.

The traditional family is also becoming less common here, with more and more couples opting to live together before marriage or choosing not to marry at all. The number of couples living in these de facto relationships increased 46 percent between 1991 and 1996.

Yet the influence of the gospel is helping many Latter-day Saint families combat these trends. "We have very faithful, stalwart members here," says Elder Dil. "To be a Latter-day Saint in New Zealand, you are really different, so you've got to be very strong in defending your faith. We have many faithful members who give their all in building the kingdom."

It can be especially challenging for young people to be confronted with so many temptations, yet, most notably in areas where local leadership is strong and the institute program is thriving, there are many examples of youth and young adults who are firm in their faith. Remarks Scott Butters, president of the

her stay strong. "When I was in a certain situation I just imagined what my parents would think, and that helped me to know the right thing to do." Additionally, she says, "The Young Women program really helps you during that age, just to know there are other people like you with the same standards and beliefs. Even though at times it may seem hard, it helps to know that other people are facing the same challenges you are." Now that she is older, the institute program has taken on that role. Institute "is quite popular in Wellington," she says. "If we don't attend, President Butters will ring us up and say, 'I didn't see you at institute last week.'"

Currently Sheree is influencing other young people as she teaches early-morning seminary in her ward.

A CONTINUAL EMPHASIS ON THE TEMPLE

New Zealand was among the first countries outside the United States to have a temple, and consequently, Church members here have the blessing of being "temple aware." Many members say this has helped them have an eternal perspective and hold fast to that which is most important in their lives.

“Since 1958, when the temple was dedicated, there has been a continual emphasis on the temple,” says temple president and former member of the Seventy Rulon G. Craven. “The temple is the doctrinal icon of the Saints in New Zealand. Because of the high cost of literature here, many Saints can’t afford to buy Church books. There’s not a lot of individual study except in the scriptures. I think they get a lot of their doctrine from the temple.”

For many Church members, particularly in the South Island, getting to the temple means traversing long distances, and it represents a sacrifice in both time and money. Some members travel 24 hours or more to reach the temple. Noeline Odgers of the Christchurch stake says that those sacrifices help members appreciate the sacredness of the temple experience. “The rewards are great, and it’s so much sweeter for us,” she says. Noeline and her husband, Allistair, have made it a goal to take their four children to the temple yearly so that they can do baptisms for the dead. “We find it keeps them focused. It just keeps that desire in their hearts to be valiant,” she says.

Shane and Noni Kereama of the Timaru Branch, Christchurch stake, radiate excitement as they share the story of their conversion and their feelings for the temple. They were baptized in 1998, and the following year, together with their two children, they were sealed as a family. Their youngest child was born in the covenant in 2000. “You’ve got to have the goal of going to the temple so you have a better understanding of your purpose,” says Shane. “Because we’ve received the blessings of the temple, it’s really kept Noni and me strong.”

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

While The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the sixth largest church in the country, many New Zealanders know little about it. Yet as members gain confidence and participate more actively in their communities, the Church’s presence is becoming increasingly known. “In the Church we’ve probably been somewhat insular; we’ve tended to do a lot of things on our own,” says Stephen Keung, president of the Auckland Panmure stake and multistake chair of public affairs for Auckland. “It’s only recently that we’ve been opening ourselves for the community to see us.”



Sydney Shepherd, national director of public affairs, says that one of the challenges the Church faces in New Zealand is in “trying to persuade government, community, and other religious leaders that we are just regular people. But there has been an opening of doors with leaders that wouldn’t have been possible 5 or 10 years ago. We’ve seen the breaking down of barriers and the corresponding change in attitude in people not of our faith.”

An activity that has helped the Church become better known in the Auckland area is the staging of an annual “Family Week.” For the past seven years, the Church, together with other religious and civic organizations, has sponsored the event in the five cities of the area. During the week various seminars and family-oriented activities are held; each has the full support of the local mayors. President Keung says, “When we started, the Area Presidency and Church Public Affairs made it very clear that the messages we needed to get across were, number one, we are good neighbors; number two, we are a Christ-centered church; and three, we are a family-oriented church.” Several other stakes outside the Auckland area sponsor similar family-oriented programs.

Another event that has generated positive publicity is the annual Christmas temple lights display, which began in 1985. The largest Christmas lights display in the country, it attracted more than 145,000



Top left: Young women practice for a New Beginnings program. Bottom left: Noni and Shane Kereama, baptized in 1998, now eagerly share the gospel with others. Above: Wellington is New Zealand's capital city. Right: Sheree Sali teaches seminary in her ward.

visitors during December 2000. Church musical groups perform each night during the month, and starting in December 2000, various political, civic, and business leaders turn on the lights and deliver a Christmas message. Last December prime minister Helen Clark was among the invited VIPs who attended. As people come to view the lights, says President Craven, "they see the temple and feel the sacredness of it."

Other successful public affairs and missionary efforts have been organized by staff members at the temple visitors' center. The center sponsors musical programs and firesides, some of which are held in remote locations. The firesides have generated numerous missionary referrals.

Additional public affairs efforts have been reaping results. For example, members have placed Church materials in many local libraries, most of which had stocked little Church literature. "The librarians don't know what is accurate Latter-day Saint material and what isn't," says Noeline Odgers. "So we've contributed Church publications and then we educate the members to use these Church library books as a resource."



A CHURCH FOR ALL CULTURES

Latter-day Saint congregations in New Zealand are noted for their friendliness, and visitors entering a typical meetinghouse will likely be greeted with a friendly hug and kiss on the cheek. Much of that warmth of spirit comes from the influence of Polynesian members. Approximately 80 percent of Church members are Maori or come from nearby Pacific islands, particularly Samoa and Tonga, while 20 percent are of European descent (*pakeha*). Yet in the country as a whole, the reverse is true: 72 percent of the population is of European descent, while 14.5 percent are Maori and the remaining 13.5 percent are Pacific Islander, Asian, or of other ethnic backgrounds.

The mix of cultures “is a great blend,” observes President Craven. Gloria Kelly agrees that each of the cultures brings its own unique strengths, yet she notes, “There’s got to be a certain amount of give and take. The Europeans get used to the fact that the Polynesians are more informal, while the Polynesians get used to the fact that Europeans are more formal. But the wonderful thing is that we’ve got a common bond—the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

For many first-generation members with a strong cultural heritage, some cultural tugging is a challenge. Each must ask, “Is my first priority my culture or my religion?” Selesi’utele T. Lavea, president of the Christchurch stake, knows these challenges firsthand as a native of Samoa. “I let people know that there is no culture more important than the culture of the gospel of Jesus Christ,” he says. “Often our leaders tell us there are some good things about a culture to bring to the Church, but there are other things that are not relevant. That is what I am trying to teach.”

Some New Zealanders have perceived the Church as being a “Maori church” or an “American church,” but public affairs and missionary efforts are helping to show that the Church is for all, regardless of ethnic background. “Happiness in family life is most likely to occur when it is based on the principles of the gospel,” says President Keung, who is of both Maori and Chinese heritage. “When you promote that, you get away from whether the Church is for any particular group. When people understand the doctrine and see the Church in its fullest sense, they see that it is universal.”

Joe Tai, a member of the Cashmere Ward, Christchurch stake, is an example of one whose Maori



© DIGITAL WISDOM/MOUNTAIN HIGH MAPS

NEW ZEALAND AT A GLANCE

- Population:** 3.8 million
- Capital city:** Wellington (163,800)
- Largest city:** Auckland (367,700)
- Church members:** 90,000
- Temples:** 1 (Hamilton New Zealand Temple)
- Stakes:** 25
The Auckland Stake, organized in 1958, was the first stake outside North America. Twenty-four stakes are on the North Island; one stake is on the South Island.
- Wards and branches:** 210
- Missions:** 2 (New Zealand Auckland and New Zealand Wellington Missions)



Above inset: Peaceful scenes such as this attract visitors from all over the world. Above: The Fjordlands at Milford Sound on the South Island rank as one of the wonders of the world with their rugged beauty. Right: Since Joe Tai’s baptism, his wife, Helena, has noticed a different atmosphere in their home. Inset: Elder Lindsay Dil, an Area Authority Seventy in the Australia/New Zealand Area.

heritage ultimately helped lead him to the Church. His wife, Helena, was a Church member but was not active when the couple married. Ten years later she decided to return to activity, and after several years she was called to be the Relief Society president in her ward. Joe, while not interested in the Church at the time, was supportive, taking her to and from meetings and members’ homes because of health challenges that made walking difficult for her.

For nearly 20 years Helena invited missionaries to their home periodically to have dinner, and they would “practice” the discussions on Joe. But while he enjoyed their company, he resisted their message—that is, until one day when he was researching information for his *whakapapa*, or Maori genealogical line. He happened upon an account of his great-uncle, a Maori chief, who had prophesied that a house of worship would be built on land where the temple now stands. The chief’s contemporaries had scoffed at the notion, but for Brother Tai, the realization of fulfilled prophecy was astounding. “I almost fell off my chair,” he recalls. “That was really the turning point for me.” Soon thereafter he was baptized, and the couple were sealed in the temple in



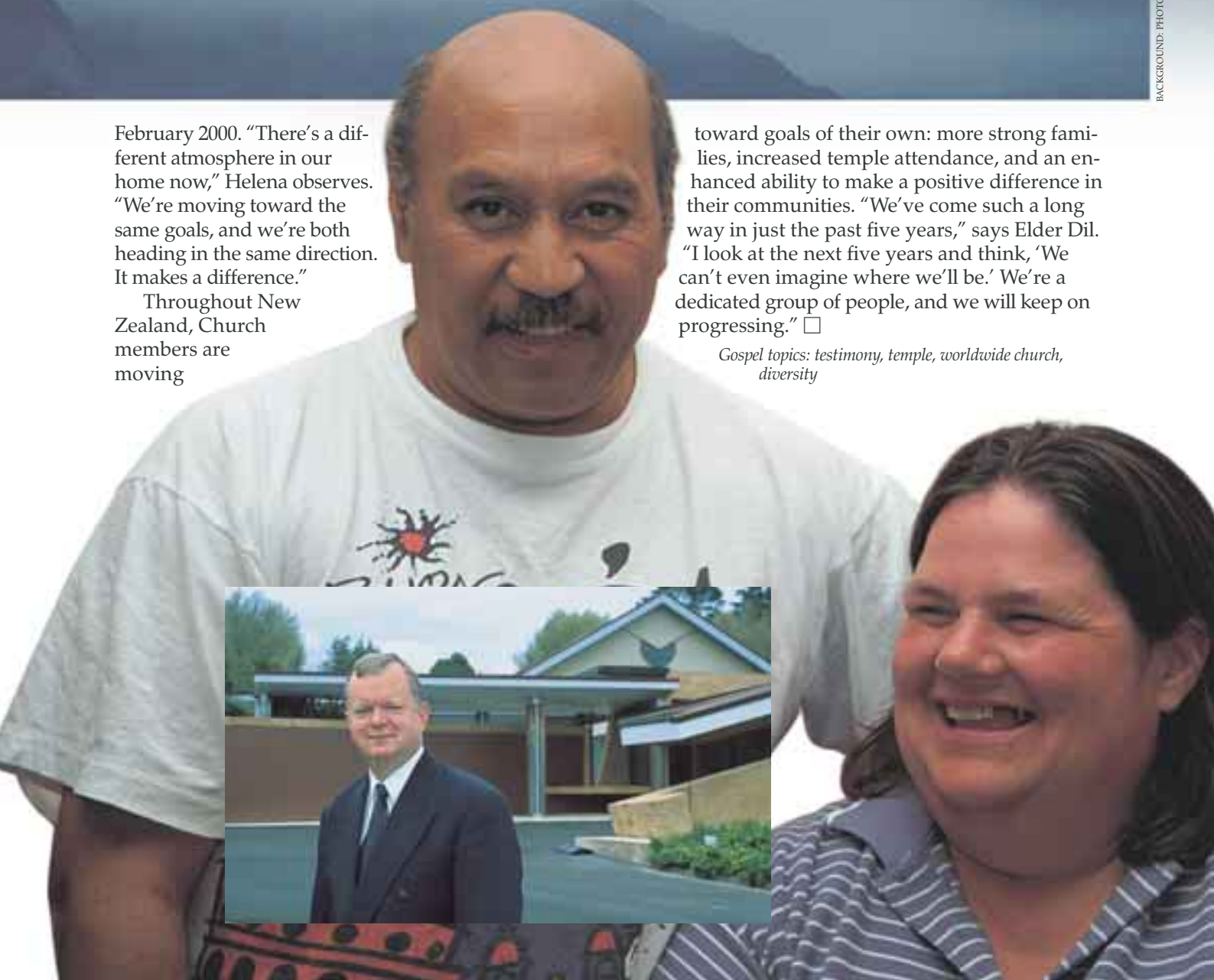
BACKGROUND: PHOTO BY BRIAN K. KELLY; INSET, LEFT: PHOTO © DIGITAL STOCK

February 2000. "There's a different atmosphere in our home now," Helena observes. "We're moving toward the same goals, and we're both heading in the same direction. It makes a difference."

Throughout New Zealand, Church members are moving

toward goals of their own: more strong families, increased temple attendance, and an enhanced ability to make a positive difference in their communities. "We've come such a long way in just the past five years," says Elder Dil. "I look at the next five years and think, 'We can't even imagine where we'll be.' We're a dedicated group of people, and we will keep on progressing." □

Gospel topics: testimony, temple, worldwide church, diversity



A LIFE AMONG MUSLIMS

BY ORIN D. PARKER

For 19 years, my wife, Rita, and I and our five children lived and worked in Muslim communities of the Middle East, developing close and lasting friendships with these sensitive and loving people. We found that we had much in common with them and a great deal indeed to learn from them. I've read Islamic poetry and some Islamic history and, of course, the Koran. But it is really in studying the people themselves that we learned about this remarkable faith.

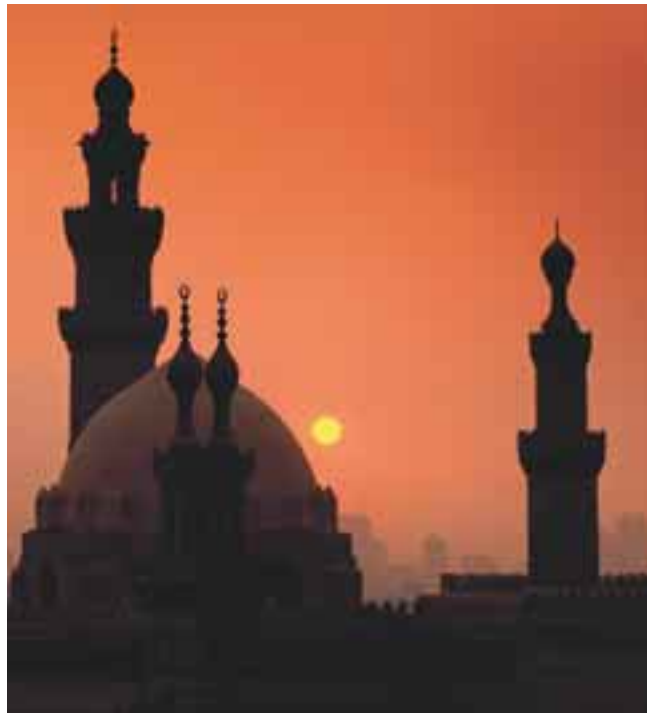
THE FAMILY AND PRAYER

We found our Muslim friends especially interested in the Latter-day Saint concept of family and family government and the codes of conduct and rules of diet and health similar to their own. We, in turn, were extremely interested in their customs, particularly those pertaining to the family. We were impressed by their use of religious language in all of their greetings. We were impressed by the way in which Muslim families ask God to bless them as they go about their daily business. Public meetings we attended also opened with a prayer: "In the name of God, the munificent and merciful." This prayer is also said before a Muslim family sits down to eat, as well as on many

other occasions. It is even inscribed at the top of government stationery and included in the formalities of government, education, and culture, at least in those countries with which I am familiar. Many of their informal greetings also invoke Allah, the name of God, and their thanks are always expressed to Allah.

Though it is an unstructured religion in the Western sense, Islam is a living religion, an all-pervasive way of life. Its philosophy guides the thought and action of the true Muslim at all times. Muslims strive to live face-to-face with God. Their house of God is wherever they may spread their prayer rug. It is a wonderful experience in the Middle East to see, five times during the day's business, all activity stop and people spread their rugs and address themselves to God. It's a marvelous experience to visit Muslim friends in their homes at the time of prayer and watch as they excuse themselves and withdraw to another room to pray. I was highly complimented once when a Muslim neighbor asked me if I would care to join him.

Muslims thank God for everything because they believe that God provides everything; when God does not provide, we must accept doing without. When you give devout Muslims a gift, they will thank not you but God, because it was God who moved you to be kind and generous.



THE FAMILY AND EDUCATION

Islam has developed as a paternalistic society. Within the family, the parents' word is final. Great respect for parents and elders is expected, and it is given. In *The Arab World Today*,¹ Morroe Berger compares the reaction of Muslims and Christians to the parable in Matthew 21:28–30. In this parable a man asks his two sons to work in the vineyard. The one says, "Yes, father," but then does not. The other says, "No, father, I cannot," but later relents and works. Now, in the Western mind and in the interpretation as given by Christ, the one who actually did the work is the one we should emulate. But the Muslim, Berger says, would follow the one who said "Yes, father," thereby showing respect to his father.

This paternalistic family pattern extends through the society to create a generally authoritarian structure. In my field, education, we found that Muslim students learn primarily through memorization and imitation rather than independent research or original work. Moreover, the individual student's academic field of study often reflects his father's or his family's desires more than his own wishes or capabilities. This, again, is an indication of how much the family dominates and of the respect the

Left: Muslims gather, where possible, to mosques for ritual prayer. Above: The sun sets over Cairo, Egypt, sometimes called the City of a Thousand Mosques. From its towers, called minarets, Muslims are called to prayer five times daily.

LEFT PHOTO © PHOTOSPIN; ABOVE: PHOTO © PHOTODISC

individual Muslim feels for his family. The family comes first. We have sometimes invited Muslim friends to our home for a special occasion, and then, at the last minute, been surprised they couldn't come because a brother or sister had come to visit them, often from a nearby house.

Education is highly revered by Muslims. Muhammad said, "The pursuit of knowledge is an act of worship," and he enjoined Muslims to "seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave." Another time, in a more humorous vein, he said, "Seek knowledge even if it be in China." Many of the oil-rich states of the Middle East provide unlimited education for their subjects. In fact, education has been free throughout Islamic history.

GOD WILLING

The Muslims have a very deep faith which is sometimes misconstrued in the West as fatalism, the belief that events are fixed in advance and that we are powerless to change them. I had a memorable experience with this aspect of the Muslim faith soon after arriving in the Middle East. I was sent to Baghdad, Iraq, to take over an office which had been somewhat neglected for a couple of years. As a young American, I was determined to go there and get the office operating efficiently. When I gave the necessary directions and orders to my Muslim staff, I found that I was constantly receiving the answer, "*Insha' Allah*," which means "God willing." I tended to interpret this response as meaning something like "mañana," or "maybe," or "if I get around to it." So I decided one day that I'd had enough of "*Insha' Allah*," and called my *farrash*, Zeydan, into my office. (A *farrash* is a combination messenger, janitor, and concierge.)

Zeydan taught me something that day I will never forget. First I gave him a little lecture on the necessity in an office for the boss to know that when something needs to be done, it would in fact be done. When I had finished talking to him in my best Arabic, he proceeded to lecture me about his faith. He explained to me that all that is done must be in accordance with the will of God, that nothing is done without or in spite of that will, and that I should always expect him to answer "*Insha' Allah*," because it would be wrong for him to say that he could do something on his own. He was not expressing an unwillingness to work but rather a realistic humility and acknowledgment that the results lay in God's hands. I finally understood.

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

Muslims share with Latter-day Saints a strong belief in salvation and the hereafter. Muhammad said, "Life is a bridge. Pass over it to paradise, but do not build your houses upon it." We were visited in Washington, D.C., one time by a family that had lived across from us in Beirut during the war years. They had constantly offered help to me after I sent my wife and children back to the United States for safety. Hajj Abdullah, the head of this family, often told me things that seemed to me to come directly out of the Doctrine and Covenants. On this occasion he told us something very similar to "he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23).

As someone who has received Muslim hospitality, I have noticed with sadness that Muslims coming into Western society are often surprised at the ignorance of Islam around them. They are especially disappointed when they are considered unbelievers. The Islamic faith has dominated the Eastern world for centuries and continues to do so today. Any attempt to define culture in that area of the world must recognize Islam as its foundation. And even

those who no longer observe all its tenets remain loyal to its basic concepts and give Islam its proper respect.

Within Islam, Christians and Jews have been held from the beginning in a special place of respect as "people of the book," the Old Testament. The term in Arabic is *ahl al-kitab*, which can also be interpreted as "family of the book." In the Islamic view, Jews, Christians, and Muslims share the same God and the same early religious heritage. Muslims see their religion as the culmination of a process stretching from Judaism to Christianity to Islam. Prophets of the Old Testament are recognized as such, and Christ is revered as a prophet, teacher, and the most perfect man. Thus it is surprising and culturally disturbing for Middle Eastern Muslims to find they are viewed as being outside the Judeo-Christian tradition.

It has been my experience that if we want to interact with Muslims as mutually respectful neighbors, we must understand and appreciate their beliefs, their philosophy, and their culture. We must come to know and love them if we hope and expect them to do the same for us. □

Orin D. Parker is a member of the Vista Fifth Ward, Vista California Stake. Gospel topics: Islam, tolerance, Muslims, Middle East

NOTE

1. *The Arab World Today* (1962), 180.



PHOTO BY ORIN D. PARKER

An imam, or prayer leader, guides children in the study of the Koran.

LORD

INCREASE OUR FAITH

Increasing our faith requires trusting the Lord with our whole souls and striving to act as He would in all circumstances.



BY ELDER JOHN K. CARMACK
Of the Seventy

Jesus Christ's early Apostles opened a rich vein of pure gold for our consideration when they pleaded to the Lord, "Increase our faith" (Luke 17:5). The statement was made in the form of a request, perhaps asking for a free gift of greater faith, but the Savior responded with a statement and a parable, treating their request as if it were the question "How can we increase our faith?" As was so often the case with such inspired inquiries, this question opened the way for a powerful teaching opportunity of great worth to all of Jesus Christ's truly committed followers. Indeed, increasing our faith in Him is one

of our greatest needs today.

As I meet missionaries around the world, often one of them asks, "How can we develop the strong faith to do miracles as we read about in the scriptures?" Those who are seeking to grow in spirituality and power in their lives and callings often seek a formula to increase their faith. During a recent mission tour, for example, I asked one of the most respected missionaries to read and explain the Apostles' plea cited above and the answer Jesus gave in the following

verses. This fine elder read it carefully, then confessed he had no idea what Jesus' answer meant. Since then I have asked other missionaries to explain that scripture, with similar responses. My initial reaction was similar to theirs. The meaning of Jesus' explanation is not immediately apparent from a cursory reading of the curious parable by which He chose to respond. On

reflection, however, we can begin to catch Jesus' meaning. Let us drill into that promising vein of truth.

THE UNTAPPED POWER OF FAITH

Jesus began His response by declaring, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed [a very tiny seed], ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you" (Luke 17:6). Jesus often hinted at the untapped power of faith and thus affirmed its elusive value. Faith to do such a miracle would be power indeed. Giving even more evidence of faith's power, the Apostle Paul explained, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb. 11:3). That kind of power is much greater than any mortal could hope to achieve, but the scripture underlines the breathtaking scope of faith as an eternal and cosmic power. Obviously if faith was the power behind the world's creation, this powerful tool predates even the creation of this world. Learning how to increase our own faith, then, would be of supreme importance. Surely Jesus did not mention the great power of faith merely to tease His Apostles by describing something beyond their grasp. More likely He expected some of them to discover and mine the gold hidden in the vein.

What is faith? Like a nugget of pure and precious gold ore, faith has many surfaces and defies a one-dimensional definition. The Apostle Paul's statement that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (JST, Heb. 11:1) is a classic statement where we can begin our dig. Often in the scriptures, faith seems almost to be a synonym for belief, albeit a strong belief that leads to righteous living and action. Yet faith is based in the truth, whereas belief alone may be in what is true or false (see Alma 32:21).

Achieving the gift of a strong belief is one aspect of faith. The belief part of faith may start as merely a desire to believe but can grow "brighter and brighter until the perfect day" (D&C 50:24). Then one could say about the person whose belief has progressed to perfection, "Your knowledge is perfect in that thing, and your faith is dormant; and this because you know" (Alma 32:34).

Remembering that Jesus spoke of the enormous power that a tiny seed of faith contained, we must conclude that in addition to belief, faith is also a principle of action and power. But unlike the belief part of faith,

the power aspect of faith would not be dormant just because belief has progressed to knowledge. Faith as a principle of power continues to operate when the belief part of faith has grown to knowledge and caused that aspect of faith to become dormant. Such faith is a great tool to do the Lord's work. Men and women can grow in spirituality to the point that they can do mighty things in the cause of the Lord, and when they do them, they operate by the power of faith.

Enoch is one of the greatest examples of one for whom faith became a powerful tool. The scriptures record that "so great was the *faith of Enoch* that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them; and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him" (Moses 7:13; emphasis added).

As the Apostles watched Jesus calm the roiling waves of Galilee, raise Lazarus from the dead, walk on water, and cause the man blind from birth to see, they desired greater faith that would enable them to participate in similar miracles. Later, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, we see that their faith had actually risen to much higher levels. Thus they participated in experiences similar to those of

the Savior, beginning with Peter and John's healing of the lame man at the gate of the temple. In this and other miracles, they exercised great faith and used their priesthood, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth (see Acts 3:4-8).

THE PARABLE OF THE UNPROFITABLE SERVANT

Let us return to Jesus' response to His Apostles' request for greater faith. After affirming the power of faith, He answered them with a parable. Perhaps they had expected a formula. Maybe they had expected Him to merely touch each of them and confer on them an increase of faith as a gift. That was not to be. His parable was extraordinary in its subtlety, probably to require the Apostles—and us—to think more than superficially about the subject of increasing one's faith. Most of us pass by this clue to a rich vein of ore with merely a passing glance. I quote it in full:

"But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he



Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God," the Apostle Paul explained.

The Apostles Peter and John exercised their faith and priesthood to heal the lame man at the temple.



is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

“And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?”

“Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow [think] not.

“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do” (Luke 17:7–10).

At first reading, this answer is obscure to most of us. Where in this parable do we find the formula the Apostles might have expected? For that matter, how does the parable teach us how to increase our faith? It seems to ignore the Apostles’ request rather than answer it. We might have expected Jesus to say something clear and concise, such as: “To increase your faith you must pray more, study the written word of God more deeply, magnify your callings more fully, and fast to help you realize your utter dependence on God.” All of that is probably good counsel and true, but that is not how Jesus chose to respond to the request. That He chose to respond as He did is much to our benefit.

On another occasion, when the Apostles had failed in an attempt to cast an unclean spirit out of a man, they asked a question closely related to the subject we are considering. They asked Jesus, “Why could not we cast them out?” Jesus explained that it was because of their unbelief, or lack of faith. He further explained that if they had just a little faith, again likening faith to a mustard seed, they could remove mountains. “Nothing shall be impossible unto you,” He told them. But then He added significantly, “Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” (see



In his great final discourse, King Benjamin said that no matter how much we have served the Lord, we remain indebted to Him.

Matt. 17:18–21). It is clear, therefore, that prayer and fasting are a part of increasing faith and accessing its power. His fuller answer in response to the Apostles' plea can lead to additional insight into what is required to gain greater faith.

GRATITUDE AND SACRIFICE

King Benjamin of the Nephites may have caught the meaning of Jesus' parabolic answer as well as anyone. In the final teachings to his people, he explained that we are utterly reliant on our Lord, even for each day of our lives and our very breath. No matter how much we have served Him, even if with our whole souls, we are "unprofitable servants" (Mosiah 2:21). And that being true, He surely has the right to require that we keep His commandments. If we keep His commandments, He has promised to bless and prosper us, and He always keeps His promises. King Benjamin explained, "He doth immediately bless you; and therefore he hath paid you. And ye are still indebted unto him, and are, and will be, forever and ever; therefore, of what have ye to boast?" (Mosiah 2:24).

Could this be what Jesus is teaching us in His parable? This begins to illuminate Jesus' parable of the servant who comes into the house from plowing or feeding cattle, yet still must prepare a meal for his master before eating and drinking. In the parable, the master would neither thank his servant nor release

him from the balance of his duties. Though the insistence on preparing the meal after a long day of work sounds harsh and ungrateful on its face, in reality that servant is greatly indebted to his master and will always be. Similarly, if we want increased faith, such as Enoch gained, we must give ourselves over completely to our Lord, utterly trusting Him and striving to act as He would act in all circumstances. No matter how difficult and impossible the circumstances we face, we must retain the attitude that we are still in the Lord's debt. Just keeping the commandments, while laudable, may be enough to maintain our faith but not enough to increase it. We must continue sacrificing and serving with no thought of reward. We do it out of love and gratitude for the Lord, to whom we owe everything.

Too often we allow ourselves to think or even say words like these: "I don't deserve this setback. You'd think after all I've done, it would not have to be like this. Why must I prove myself over and over again? This is my time to rest from all this responsibility. I've done enough."

Perhaps the Savior was teaching us that if we are serious about desiring greater faith, nothing short of maintaining a constant eternal perspective will do. If we place *any* condition on our willingness to serve the Lord with all our hearts, we diminish our faith. If we have complete trust in Him, our faith will increase, and that means the strength of our belief and our power to act will increase. We will not think we have done our

duty and that is enough. We will continue with pure intent and total commitment the rest of our lives. Apparently we are to learn from the parable that maintaining such an attitude is the way to increase our faith.

When the Prophet Joseph Smith left Nauvoo, bound for Carthage Jail and death, he had perhaps reached a point in his life where he could act with complete trust in the Lord, even in the face of grave danger. He could have escaped his enemies by departing Illinois to settle in the wilderness of the West. From there he could have directed the Saints to join him. He already knew prophetically that the Saints were going to settle in the Rocky Mountains (see *History of the Church*, 5:85). But rather, he said, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men" (D&C 135:4). He clearly had sublimated his own desire to live to the purposes of the Lord and His plan for him. By completely giving himself in service to God, despite tremendous pressure to do otherwise, he had gained faith such as that enjoyed by ancient prophets.

COMPLETE TRUST IN THE LORD

It thus seems that Jesus gave His Apostles a clue to the lonely and hard road that must be followed if they desired to increase their faith. He wasn't saying, "Don't bother to be obedient." "Obedience," He seemed to say, "is a beginning, but if you want faith as the ancient Apostles and Enoch, you have to do and be much, much more." That is the road Enoch traveled as a doubtful, fearing, slow-of-speech young man who received his call and later became the powerful "seer . . . come among us" (Moses 6:38; see also Moses 7:13). Likewise, the Apostles who attained greater faith also bore little resemblance to the good but ordinary men who responded to His call to the ministry. The road to increased faith is long and hard but is available to those willing to pay the price.

One modern example of a man who has gained that increased faith is President Gordon B. Hinckley. When President Hinckley announced his goal of providing 100 temples by the year 2000, he acted by faith. He didn't build any of the temples using his own construction skills. He acted by the word of faith, and that faith unlocked the energy of thousands of others who physically planned and built those temples. He also exercised the priesthood keys that he and only he held.

This was a miracle just as surely as if he had removed a mountain. Faith has thus brought about the miracle of more than 100 temples. Even a lifetime of service, of obedience, and of magnifying his callings was not enough to cause this miracle. President Hinckley could have said, "I have done enough. I am old and deserve a rest." If he had adopted that attitude, we would not have seen the result of his increased faith. This example helps us understand more fully what Jesus suggested to His Apostles in answering their request for increased faith.

To summarize, we do not increase our faith by following a formula, although the ingredients of fasting, prayer, and righteous living are part of that process. Increasing our faith requires trusting the Lord with our whole souls. We cannot say, "We have done enough and deserve to rest." Nor does the increase come through definitions, logic, or philosophy. Rather, we must:

- Do what is right and serve the Lord because we know, trust, and love Him with all of our souls.
- Harbor no thought that we deserve a reward or thanks for what we do, although rewards will surely come.
- Humbly ask, seek, and knock.
- Never demand anything of our Lord, because we are always in His debt.
- Leave to Him the final decision in all things, having the attitude "Not my will, but thine be done."
- Be prepared to sacrifice, even unto death, for our entire mortal lives.

As members of the Lord's Church, we can increase our faith, if we desire, by going beyond the minimum requirements of the gospel and developing complete trust in the Lord. All of this is part of the golden ore found in Jesus' interesting and subtle parable given in response to the early Apostles' request, "Increase our faith." □

Elder John K. Carmack served as a member of the Seventy from 1984 to 2001.

Gospel topics: faith, obedience, gratitude, sacrifice

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

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

1. How does submission to God lead to greater faith?
2. Why is it essential that we serve the Lord with no thought of reward?



As he humbly submitted to the Lord's will, the Prophet Joseph Smith gained mighty faith like that of the ancient prophets.

Coping

WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS

Many illnesses cause temporary misery, but generally the afflicted know their health will improve in a matter of days. Such is not the case with chronic illness.

The term chronic illness encompasses a multitude of prolonged conditions with a variety of symptoms. With adjustments, some individuals with such illnesses are able to live fairly normal lives. Others must radically curtail their daily activities. All must learn to deal with loss in some way—in short, to live differently.

The gospel, scriptures, priesthood blessings, family and friends, and other resources can help provide strength for dealing with the challenges of living with chronic illness. What follows are suggestions and insights gained by Church members who have experienced these conditions.

HAD I LOST MY IDENTITY?



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I had fibromyalgia for most of my life and began having symptoms of multiple chemical sensitivity disorder at age 19. When I was in my mid-20s, my illnesses took a turn for the worse, leaving me housebound and unable to care for my family. Prior to that time I had many interests and abilities, I was active in Church callings, and I attended the temple frequently. When all of that was taken away, I felt my identity had been taken away as well. I went through a period of grieving for loss of self as I might grieve for the loss of another through death.

It took years before I really felt in my heart that Heavenly Father valued me no matter what I could or could not do. My talents and interests, which I had thought of as an integral part of me, were really like a beautiful set of jewels that I had been privileged to wear for a time. They could be taken off without changing who I really was.

I realized that Heavenly Father's love for us is greater than we can comprehend. He will not always take the pain away, but He will always be there to help us.

Even now, having regained my health, I find it difficult to look back on those many years of pain without being overcome by emotions. Yet I am grateful for this trial because of the many things I have learned and because of the person it has helped me become.—**Alice E. Workman, Sequim First Ward, Port Angeles Washington Stake**

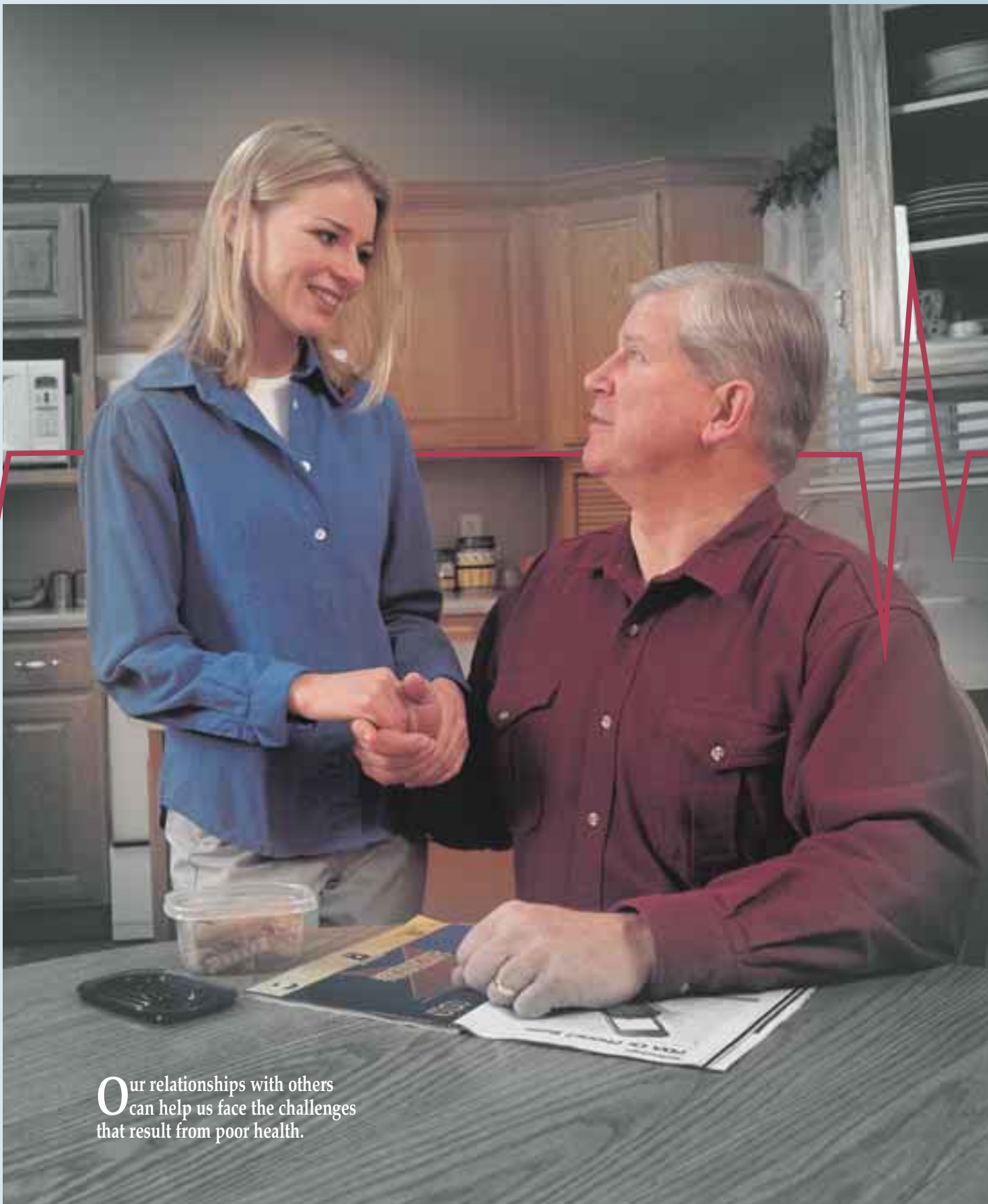
EVERYONE NEEDS TO SERVE



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Our experience with chronic illness began almost 10 years ago when our bright, energetic son

Russell, then a senior in high school, developed an unnamed neurological disorder. He left the hospital grateful to be alive but unable to sit, stand, walk, or speak clearly. His mind was still intact, however, and his sense of humor was as sharp as ever. We rejoiced



Our relationships with others can help us face the challenges that result from poor health.

in bringing him home and began to put our family back together.

The experience has reinforced our belief that every Church member needs to serve in some way. Russ is now a home teacher. Since most homes are not wheelchair-accessible, his assigned family comes to our home once a month to receive their visit and gospel discussion. When it is Russ's turn to teach, he downloads the First Presidency message from the Church Web site onto his computer and then prepares a discussion for his companion to read. He often adds graphics and his own testimony.

Since I am his 24-hour caregiver, I am also unable to hold a demanding Church calling. However, I am able to be a visiting teaching supervisor, which

requires making telephone calls each month.

Our family has come to better appreciate our relationships with those around us, and we have had some special experiences as we have shared our burden with others. For example, a special home teacher did research and then led a fund-raising campaign to buy Russ a speech synthesizer. A great deal of love and generosity went into the project. At first my husband was hesitant to have others pay for something he thought he should provide.

Our home teacher helped him realize it was something that the many people who wanted to help could do. *They* needed it as much as Russ did. We realized that Heavenly Father did not

intend for us to be completely independent from those around us. We need each other.—**Lynda Monson, Burley Ninth Ward, Burley Idaho Stake**

THE GREATEST EXPERT OF ALL



After being diagnosed with a rare disease called scleroderma, I put all my faith and trust in

the medical specialists. But was I in for a shock when they told me there is no known cause and no known cure for the disease! I soon realized I needed to adjust my thinking and ultimately rely on Heavenly Father. While I continued to work closely with my doctors, doing all I could to cope with this disease, I placed Heavenly Father at the head of my medical team. I prayed to Him before, during, and after every one of my doctor appointments, both for myself and the doctors treating me. Heavenly Father really is the greatest expert of all, no matter what our ailment might be.

I also created what I called a "coping file," which held my patriarchal blessing, uplifting quotes and stories, letters and cards of love and encouragement from family and friends, and copies of my favorite general conference talks. I kept this folder in a special place in my bookcase so I knew just where to find it when I started feeling blue.

Also effective were the pictures of the Savior I displayed throughout my home. I was able to see Him no matter what room I was in. When I looked into His eyes, I was reminded to shift my focus from my pain to His voluntary suffering on my behalf. And when I lifted my vision from my physical and immediate condition and tried to have a more spiritual, eternal perspective, I saw my

HOW OTHERS CAN HELP

1. If you would like to help someone with a chronic illness, ask what his or her needs are, and recognize that these needs may not remain constant. Realize too that the severity of one's physical condition is not necessarily reflected in one's appearance. People may look healthy even when they are not feeling well.

2. Do not take offense if an individual declines one of your visits. He or she may not feel up to a social call, but that does not mean your friendship is not desired. Indeed, the individual may be in particular need of your friendship, as feelings of isolation are common among those with chronic illnesses.

3. Do not criticize an individual's course of medical treatment. Instead, be willing to listen so that individuals can make wise decisions on their own. Some people appreciate receiving relevant information from reliable publications, but ask if such information is desired before you get involved.

4. Recognize the person behind the illness. Avoid using labels such as "the sister with Parkinson's disease" or "the boy in the wheelchair." And do not assume that a person who is physically incapacitated is mentally incapacitated as well. Even if an individual cannot speak

vocally, he or she will appreciate your attention when you greet him or her directly instead of speaking only with other family members.

5. Do not suggest that an individual's affliction is the result of sin or that he or she could be healed if greater faith were exercised. And don't suggest that the individual could overcome his or her condition through mere willpower.

6. Even if you presume an individual is not able to attend a ward activity or social event, extend the invitation and allow him or her to decide. It is helpful to ask ahead of time if there are ways in which an event could be made more accessible or a menu altered to accommodate a special diet.

7. Many ill individuals who cannot attend Church meetings appreciate it when the meetings are brought to them. Ask the bishop to inquire about priesthood holders bringing the sacrament to the member's home. The individual might appreciate receiving a copy of the sacrament meeting program, ward newsletter, lesson handouts, or tapes of lessons and talks.

8. Being a caregiver to an individual with a chronic illness can be physically and emotionally taxing. Consider offering to give the caregiver an afternoon or day off. You might prepare some activities you could do with the chronically ill person as you visit.



Children often learn valuable lessons when a parent has a chronic illness.

trials in a whole new light.—**Reneé Roy Harding, Sugar Land First Ward, Houston Texas South Stake**

MY FAMILY WAS BLESSED

Being a parent with chronic health problems is difficult but not all bad. I am sure my children were disappointed—as was I—when I couldn't ride bikes with them or always be there to cheer them on at track meets. But as adults, they tell

me how much it meant to them that they always knew where they could find me and that they could tell me anything because I always had the time to talk. They said every night was like family home evening at our house. They all learned about responsibility and how to do their share of the housework. They watched their father tenderly help me in so many ways, and now they are better spouses because of it. They have learned to be kind and loving and to have empathy for others who struggle. Would I trade these lessons learned by myself and others? On my bad days I might be tempted. But no. This experience has taught me, my

family, and many others things that are priceless and eternal.—**Linda Petersen, Buena Vista First Ward, Washington Utah Buena Vista Stake**

RELYING ON PRIESTHOOD POWER



I have had osteoarthritis since my early 20s and have also developed fibromyalgia and asthma.

There were times I used to wonder if I had done something in the pre-mortal existence to earn such "punishment," but during one of my

PHOTO BY CRAIG DIMOND

many priesthood blessings I was reassured that it wasn't a punishment at all, that Heavenly Father was well aware of my condition and would help me endure it.

I have often had to call on my husband for a priesthood blessing to get me through the pain and illness so I could cope with the task at hand. I know that after all the pills, injections, and treatments, it is the power of the priesthood that has helped the most. I have also been helped by placing my name on the temple prayer roll.

As the years have passed, my ability to do things has diminished. Instead of the calligraphy and handcraft I used to love doing, I now do mountains of family history research for family and friends. I take comfort from the scripture "to every thing there is a season" (Eccl. 3:1). Now is my season to do quiet, gentle things.

—**Barbara Christensen, Greenmount Ward, Perth Australia Dianella Stake**

SEEK LEARNING "OUT OF THE BEST BOOKS"



After I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, I found that the Lord helped me more as I became more active in the management of my condition. When I was first diagnosed, one doctor, a specialist in the field, suggested

I sit back and allow the disease to take its course, since there was nothing I could do about it. By following that advice, I could easily have sunk into a state of hopelessness and despair, which are among the adversary's favorite tools. Instead, I was blessed with friends and family who helped provide me with information about my condition. I found that good information could empower me and give me hope.

There are many sources where information can be found: medical journals, the local library, bookstores, the Internet. Realize, however, that not all information is truth. The Lord commands us to obtain wisdom and learning from the best resources (see D&C 88:118; 109:14).—**Scott Hinrichs, North Ogden 11th Ward, North Ogden Utah East Stake**

THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS



"When we take Jesus' yoke upon us, this admits us eventually

to what Paul called the 'fellowship of [Christ's] sufferings' (Philip. 3:10). Whether illness or aloneness, injustice or rejection, etc., our comparatively small-scale sufferings, if we are meek, will sink into the very marrow of the soul. We then better appreciate not only Jesus' sufferings for us, but also His matchless character, moving us to greater adoration and even emulation."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "From Whom All Blessings Flow," Ensign, May 1997, 12.

COMFORT IN THE SCRIPTURES

Since I was diagnosed with a debilitating chronic illness



five years ago, one of my most important resources for comfort has been the scrip-

tures. As I have read and pondered, I have been blessed with peace and a better understanding of my situation.

For example, as I first read the book of Ether in the Book of Mormon, it was easy to compare my afflictions to the furious wind the Lord sent to blow the Jaredite barges across the great deep (see Ether 6:5–6). I realized He was blowing them in the direction they needed to go! Isn't that the way I want to go as well—to a land of promise and a purer heart?

I learned about the importance of prayer as I read that

when the Jaredites were buried in the depths of the sea, they cried unto the Lord and He delivered them (see v. 7). I have followed their example, and my faith has increased as I have been delivered from pain and discouragement.

I learned about gratitude as I read that the Jaredites, in the midst of their journey, sang praises to the Lord and thanked Him day and night (see v. 9). When they finally reached the promised land, they bowed themselves in humility and shed tears of joy because they considered their harrowing voyage an example of "the multitude of His tender mercies" (v. 12). By changing my perspective, I have also been able to recognize the tender hand of the Lord in my life day by day and sometimes even hour by hour.

I keep a scripture journal and jot down my thoughts and comparisons as I study. This has been a great comfort to me as I have gone back over previous entries, remembering past insights and recognizing my spiritual growth. Through my experience with chronic illness, my heart has changed and I have come to know the Lord as I have studied His words.—**Melissa Coffin, Seattle 12th Ward, Seattle Washington Stake**

UPLIFTED BY MUSIC

In the more than 10 years that I have battled Crohn's disease, I have found that music is a great source of inspiration and strength to me, especially at times when I am struggling to cope with my daily challenges.

Recently I was having a difficult month, and I found myself asking questions such as "Why am I so sick?" "Will there ever be an end to this suffering?" At the time, a recording of Church hymns was playing on my stereo. The words of one hymn caught my attention:

*Where can I turn for peace?
Where is my solace
When other sources cease to
make me whole? . . .*

*Where is the quiet hand to calm
my anguish?*

*Who, who can understand?
He, only One.*

*He answers privately,
Reaches my reaching
In my Gethsemane, Savior and Friend.
(Hymns, no. 129)*

The words touched my heart and provided the comfort I sought. On many similar occasions when I have longed for peace, I have found that inspiring music uplifts my spirit.—**Hazel A. Grey, Te Awamutu Branch, Temple View New Zealand Stake** □

Gospel topics: illness, adversity, faith

More on this topic: See Sherrie Johnson, "Helping Those with Chronic Illness," Ensign, July 1994, 56–60; Richard G. Scott, "To Be Healed," Ensign, May 1994, 7–9; Libby Knapp, "Living with Chronic Illness," Ensign, Mar. 1991, 51–53.

Visit www.lds.org or see Church magazines on CD.

Music can be
a source of
inspiration and
strength to those
who are suffering.



PASS IT ALONG

THESE CARDS REALLY WORK

By JONATHAN H. STEPHENSON *Assistant Managing Editor*



Why are so many members in the California Sacramento Mission excited about the Church's new pass-along cards?

Michael Cox knows the value of always carrying one of the Church's new pass-along cards in his pocket. He was walking to his car after shopping at a local outlet store when he noticed an elderly woman having car trouble. As he came closer, she looked at him and pleaded, "I can't start my car. Can you help?" Although he is not an auto mechanic, Michael quickly assessed the situation and got the engine running.

"Now, this is going to cost you," he said with a smile. "I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and would like to give you a card."

Startled, the woman said, "I am a member too! But I haven't been to church in a long time."

Michael replied, "Well, we miss you; we love you and want you to come back." Tears filled her eyes as they both felt the Spirit.

"Would your friend also like a card?" Michael asked, glancing toward another woman in the car. Gladly they both accepted the cards, and Michael, who is a member of the Elk Grove California Stake, said good-bye, trusting the Spirit

would prompt his new friends to call the toll-free number and ask for the free video mentioned on the card.

Lorenzo Castillo knows of the blessings that can come from accepting a pass-along card. "I was getting on a train in Sacramento when a young man in a white shirt and tie leaving the

Members of the Elk Grove California Stake show their enthusiasm and the cards they have successfully used.



A pass-along card shared by Phyllis Tisserand (left) was instrumental in bringing her neighbor Sally Quintos into the Church.

train handed me a card. He pointed out the picture of the Savior on the

card, but because I cannot speak English, I didn't understand what he was saying. The card was also in English. But the picture of Jesus Christ interested me, and I wanted to know what this young man had to say about Him. I saw the phone number and dialed it when I got home. Someone answered in English, but soon I was speaking to someone in Spanish. They told me they had a book and a video about Jesus Christ to send me. I was studying with another church at the time but didn't feel right about it. I gave them my address." After several months of study and prayer, Lorenzo and his wife, Carmen, and their three children were baptized. They are now members of the Elk Grove stake.

The spirit of friendship and missionary work is growing among members and their neighbors in the California Sacramento Mission because members are carrying and giving away what are known as pass-along cards. Provided by the Church, they have a color picture on one side and usually an offer on the other side for a free gift, such as a video or book.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recently encouraged all members to "carry a packet of these attractive pass-along cards and give them to persons—even casual acquaintances."¹ Members in the Sacramento area have taken this counsel to heart.

"Our bishopric talked about them in sacrament meeting and distributed them afterwards," explains Jeff Larson of the El Dorado stake. "I went home and thought of the people across the street from us. I knocked on their door and said, 'I thought about you today at church. They were handing out these cards, and there's a free video about the birth of Christ.' With big smiles on their faces, they said, 'Thank you. And thanks for thinking of us.' When I followed up a couple of weeks later, they had received the video and really enjoyed it, especially their children."

Why are so many members excited about these cards? "They work," says Robert J. Grow, president of the California Sacramento Mission, an 11-stake area in north central California. Giving out pass-along cards really works because it's convenient, it's easy, and it invites the Spirit!

IT'S CONVENIENT

Their small size makes the cards handy to carry, both for the giver and receiver. The toll-free number and free



GETTING CREATIVE: PASS-ALONG CARD IDEAS

“I think members can quickly get up to speed on how to use them. Doing a 30-second role play in Relief Society or priesthood meeting gives members ideas on how to give away the cards.”—**Spencer Weston, El Dorado California Stake**

“At work I have a big file cabinet with flowers on it. Next to it I have a sign that says, ‘Free video, take one.’ I have had many people take one of the pass-along cards and say, ‘I’m really glad to see this. I’ve wanted something like this.’”—**Judy Michelsen, Fair Oaks California Stake**

“Our ward prepared Easter baskets for members to give to their neighbors. Each basket contained a picture of Christ, a copy of ‘The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,’ a copy of the family proclamation,

and a *Lamb of God* pass-along card. We also put some candy in each of them. Ward members were invited to give them to their neighbors. The demand was so great we had to substitute Easter bags for baskets. We did 70 bags and quickly ran out of them! Each Sunday for several months, ward members told about their experiences, and the ward mission leader followed up. We saw an awakening to the value of the pass-along cards among the members.”—**Rosemarie Evans, El Dorado California Stake**

“I usually give out the *Lamb of God* card and the Book of Mormon card together. It helps make the connection that the Book of Mormon is an additional revelation on Christianity.”—**Alexandra McLeod, Elk Grove California Stake**

“Each building in our stake has a place in the foyer where members can easily find and take some pass-along cards each time they come to Church meetings.”—**Jeff Wagner, El Dorado California Stake**



gift make them especially inviting. Themes that focus on Jesus Christ and strengthening the family make them ideal for special occasions such as Christmas, Easter, Mother’s Day, and Father’s Day.

Spencer Weston of the El Dorado stake says that people who receive the cards “feel more comfortable about calling a toll-free number because it’s more private than a local number or someone coming to the door. For members, the cards allow you to be spontaneous, to take advantage of every opportunity to share the gospel.”

“The *Nativity* card made it so simple,” says Brian Melville of the El Dorado stake. “I know many people who sent out a pass-along card with their Christmas cards. This was a very natural thing to do.”

IT’S EASY

Many members who have been somewhat reluctant to approach people about the Church are finding they can feel comfortable and relaxed about giving pass-along cards because the cards are almost universally received in a positive manner.

Brett Millett of the Fair Oaks stake expresses how the pass-along cards have helped him become more involved in missionary work: “I’ve been a missionary ‘wimp’ for 20 years since my full-time mission. I just

have not been as free or open with the gospel as I need to be. It’s as though I’m afraid or there’s something in the way. The pass-along cards have helped me to overcome the fear. They fit so comfortably into my desires to share the gospel.”

“When I first saw the cards,” says Jeff Larson, “the picture caught my attention and I thought, ‘This is going to be easy to pass out to people.’ This is the perfect way to be nonconfrontational. The cards and videos on Christ represent something we have in common with many people.”

Cards that focus on the family are ideal for Mother’s or Father’s Day.

Gloria Martinez of the Fair Oaks stake says: "I'm usually too shy to approach people about the Church, but using those cards was so easy. Giving them away makes me feel good because, finally, I feel comfortable doing missionary work."

IT INVITES THE SPIRIT

Members are also discovering that the successful use of pass-along cards begins with a prayer in the heart and a reliance on the Lord and His Holy Spirit.

"You can just hand the cards out and leave the rest up to people and the Spirit," says Mark Jansson of the Elk Grove stake.

Brother Millett related the following experience that took place while he was returning from a business trip: "As I sat down on the plane, I felt prompted to talk to the man next to me. He later indicated that he also felt he should sit next to me. Our discussion turned to religion from comments about my mission. He had many questions, and what I remember most was how I felt guided by the Spirit. I bore my testimony to him and invited him to meet with the missionaries. As the plane landed, giving him a pass-along card was the natural way to end our conversation. And I said, 'If you want more information, this is how you can get it.'"

Phyllis Tisserand of the Lodi stake was motivated by a sense of compassion when she noticed that her neighbor was going through some difficult times. "My heart went out to her," she says. "I knew she needed the gospel and the love that is found in the Church."

So she gave her neighbor a pass-along card, knowing that if she would watch the *Lamb of God* video, it would help her. "The cards are wonderful because you feel the Spirit when you hand one out," she says. Her neighbor, Sally Quintos, later joined the Church. Sister Quintos says: "I knew I needed guidance, and I was searching for it. I felt something driving me to go ahead and call. And I wanted something about Christ."

Because of her baptism into the Church, one of Sister Quintos's relatives thought she was in danger of eternal damnation. "I told him I had something I wanted him to see." While they were watching the *Lamb of God* video, she recalls, he didn't say a word. "He had tears in his eyes when it ended and said, 'You do believe in Christ.' I then gave him a pass-along card, and he has sent for his own copy of the video."

A CHANGE OF HEART

Pass-along cards provide members with a new way to fulfill the Lord's injunction: "And thou must open thy mouth at all times, declaring my gospel with the sound of rejoicing" (D&C 28:16). They are a tool that encourages us to have a missionary attitude and to do something about it, perhaps even for the first time.

"My family's attitude about missionary work has changed," says Brother Millett. "President Wood, our stake president, has taught us what his thoughts are at night when he prays. He says, 'Lord, if you'll help me know the right moment to open my mouth, I promise I will speak.' That has inspired and motivated me. I just feel personally responsible. We've started to pray that each of us individually will have a missionary experience every day, and it's had an effect."

"These cards help build a mentality that we can find people for the missionaries to teach," says Brian Melville. "We need to look for opportunities. We are responsible for listening to the Spirit to know who needs our contact."

A pass-along card helped bring Roxanne Schilling closer to the Savior. She picked up one outside a supermarket from some missionaries who were singing carols a few days before Christmas. She remembers how pleasantly surprised she was to be given such an attractive card without any pressure to sign a petition or give money as other groups often do.

She read it on the way home, then left it on the car console. The next day she noticed it again. "Hmmm, a video on the birth of Christ. How appropriate!" she thought. "I had a good feeling about calling," she says now.

When she came home from work just a few days later, her husband said, "Some ladies came by to deliver a videotape and left their phone number." The missionaries watched the video with her and some members of her family. "I was impressed with the quality of the production," she reports. Soon she and other family members were receiving the discussions. A few months later Sister Schilling, with the support of her family, became a member of the Church, residing in the El Dorado stake.

Not all stories about the placement of a pass-along card will necessarily end with someone joining the Church. But how will you know what the ending of your stories about these cards will be, unless you pass them along? □

Gospel topics: missionary work, Holy Ghost

NOTE

1. "Sharing the Gospel," *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 9.



I Knew We Needed to Find the Book

By Lynn M. Schlick

When I reached the age of 40, I decided to start an exercise program of walking every day for one hour. My walk took me along a beautiful parkway near our home in Birmingham, Alabama. During these walks, I began thinking of spiritual things and developed a desire to find knowledge of what I then called my “inner self”—of who I really was.

At that time my husband and I weren’t going to any particular church. But I had always been a religious person, so I knew how to pray. Each day before I began my walk, I prayed that I would grow spiritually during that solitary hour of reflection. Just as my body was growing stronger through my daily exercise, I wanted my spirit to grow.

Praying and meditating as I walked, I began to feel inspiring thoughts: I must keep my body pure and clean so the Spirit of God could dwell in me, so I had to stop drinking alcohol and start eating more healthily; when my life was over, what I had accomplished in my career would not be important, but how I had treated others. As principles such as these filled my mind, I felt I should get a book and write them down immediately after each walk. The words seemed to flow without my having to think about them. Days and months passed, and the pages of my journal became filled. My constant prayer was to continue to grow spiritually.

In the meantime, my husband was offered a job in Las Vegas, Nevada. After much thought we decided to accept the offer and move west. My last entry in my

journal was, “We move soon to Nevada. I pray that I will become more enlightened as I start my new beginnings.”

On the day we arrived in Las Vegas, we began to look at homes. As we prepared to begin our search, I said a silent prayer that we would find a home and that I would continue to grow spiritually. To my surprise, the first home we looked at was next to a Latter-day Saint temple. It had an angel on top whose hand and trumpet seemed to extend toward me.

The next day I went to the public library, pulled out an encyclopedia, and looked up the word *Mormon*, as I had no idea what this church was like. I read there about a man named Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. I asked the librarian for a copy of this book, but she didn’t know what it was. I started to wonder if there still existed such a book, so instead I checked out an LDS book called *Gospel Principles*.

When I took the book home and started to read, I was dumbfounded. The principles therein were like those I’d been writing in my journal for the past year! My husband also read the book, and we agreed that the gospel principles made sense; however, we both had a lot of questions. I knew we needed to find the Book of Mormon.

Three months passed. One morning as I was cleaning our new home, I answered a knock at the door and was surprised to see two missionaries standing on our front porch. They introduced themselves and asked if I wanted to know more about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Boy, did I! I don’t know who was more amazed as I expressed my excitement at the missionaries’ unexpected arrival and told them I had a lot of questions. Within minutes the missionaries placed in my hands a copy of the Book of Mormon. As I beheld the book for the first time, I felt a deep sense of gratitude. I had finally found it!

The elders then asked if they could come back when my husband was home. Thinking my husband wouldn’t want to talk to missionaries, I was about to answer no when the telephone rang. It was my husband calling from work to chat. When he asked me what I was doing, I took a deep breath and told him. I received my second surprise of the day when he replied, “Well, why don’t you have them over when I can talk to them too.”

The missionaries returned the next evening, and my husband and I began participating in the discussions. I read the Book of Mormon within two weeks and was again amazed at how similar its teachings were to the principles I’d recorded in my “spiritual journal.” As I shared my walking experiences with the missionaries, it dawned on me that God *had* helped me grow spiritually and that He had led me to the Book of Mormon, my spiritual textbook. At last I’d found what I was looking for! My husband and I were baptized six weeks later. One year after our baptism, we were sealed in the very temple on whose spire I had seen the statue of the angel Moroni.

We’ve now been members of the Church for 12 years. We’ve loved our membership in the Church and have grown through the various callings we’ve held. Throughout my years of service as a stake missionary, Relief Society counselor, seminary

teacher, temple ordinance worker, Sunday School teacher, and now Young Women president, I've shared my testimony and the teachings of the Book of Mormon. With each calling and with each new situation I have encountered in life, I've found the answers I've needed in this remarkable book. Daily I thank Heavenly Father for leading me to the Book of Mormon.

Lynn M. Schlick is a member of the Alexander Ward, Las Vegas Nevada Lone Mountain Stake.

Gospel topics: conversion, testimony

My Long Climb Home

By Mavis Grace Jones

I joined the Church in England in 1965, but the hostile reaction of my father and other pressures eventually led me to become less active.

Those were painful and unhappy times. On the outside it seemed easy to stay away, and I suppose I started to break the Word of Wisdom to fool myself that I didn't care. Eventually I convinced myself Heavenly Father no longer loved or cared about me, and I felt completely rejected and alone.

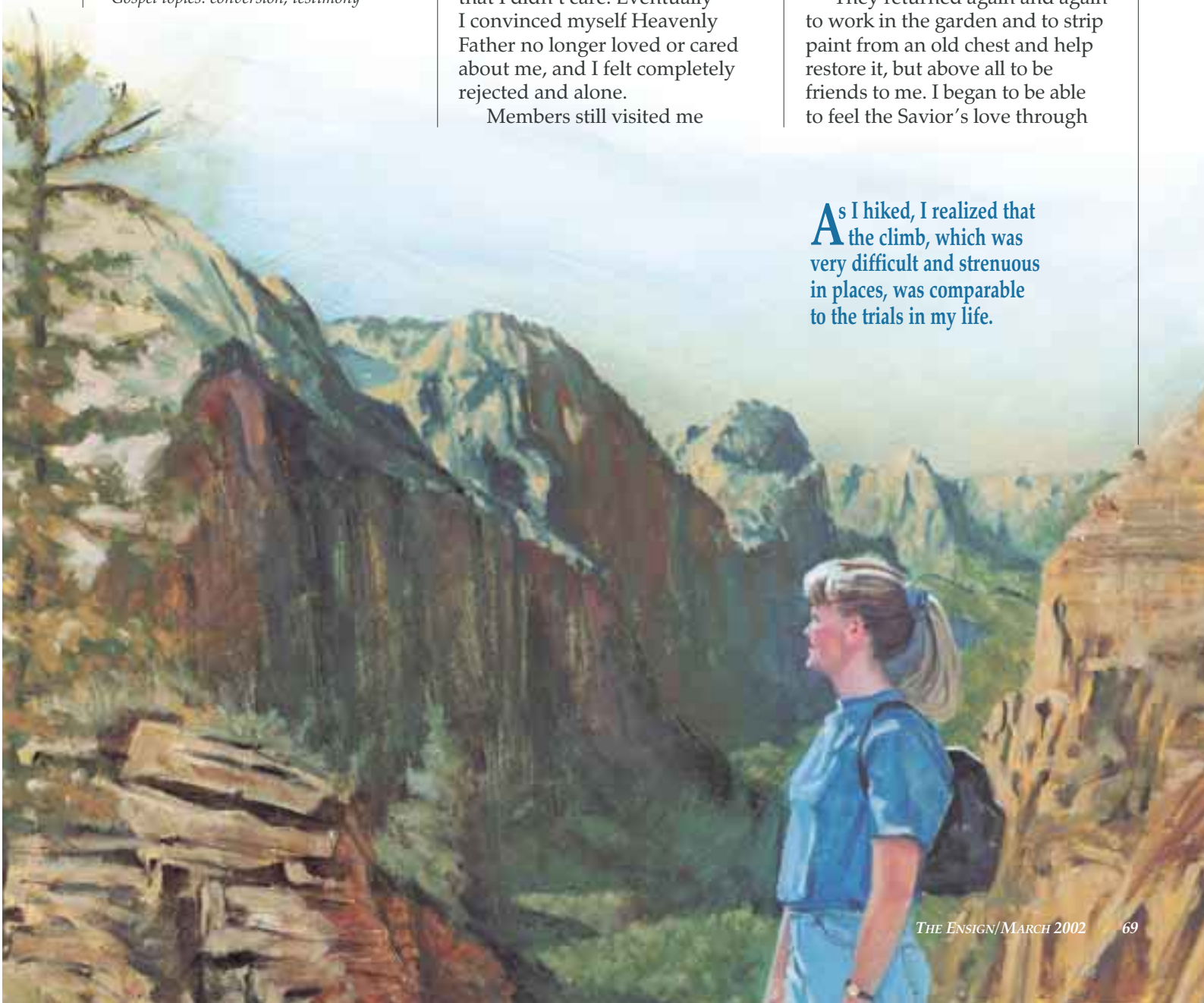
Members still visited me

occasionally, but to no avail. I both resented and envied them.

Then one evening a pair of senior sister missionaries dropped by. I was determined to give them a hard time so that they wouldn't make a return visit, but something inside me warmed to them. They had come as friends, not to preach to me or make me feel guilty.

They returned again and again to work in the garden and to strip paint from an old chest and help restore it, but above all to be friends to me. I began to be able to feel the Savior's love through

As I hiked, I realized that the climb, which was very difficult and strenuous in places, was comparable to the trials in my life.



them as they filled my home with peace and love through their obvious joy in living the gospel. They gained my trust, something that was so difficult for me to give.

All too soon their missions came to an end and they returned home, but before they left we made arrangements for me to join them in America for a holiday.

The trip turned out to be wonderful. Rebellion against the Church was still within my heart, however, so I would not attend any Church meetings. In fact, I took great delight in drinking coffee in front of my two friends, trying hard to show them I was “untouchable.” I soon found out I was far from untouchable.

On the Saturday before Easter, we went to visit Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California, and were deeply moved by the paintings and other art having to do with the Savior. It seemed that the Atonement was suddenly becoming real to me. A week later I was in southern Utah on the Sunday of general conference. Being alone for a while, I switched on the television to a talk given by President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency. As I listened to that great man, I could not contain the tears of guilt and shame.

That afternoon I climbed to one of the observation points in Zion National Park. As I walked, I tried to put my life into perspective, and I found that the climb, which was very difficult and strenuous in places, was comparable to the trials in my life. I pressed on and reached the end of the climb, where I looked down at the beauty of creation and felt exhilaration.

The spirit of rebellion was not completely gone from my heart, but over time I could feel the hostility melting away. I began to experience feelings of love—new,

beautiful, and strange to me. I also began to learn that I could be loved. I knew I needed to change my life, to truly repent.

When I returned home I felt much different inside. I was beginning to feel hope, and I was learning to pray for guidance and forgiveness. True repentance didn’t take place overnight in my life. It took many months before I felt I had been forgiven. I made a decision to start attending church again, the most difficult part of which was getting the courage to actually walk back through the doors.

I become overwhelmed as I think of the meaning of the

Savior’s Atonement: “Oh, it is wonderful that he should care for me enough to die for me!” (“I Stand All Amazed,” *Hymns*, no. 193). It is also wonderful that two sister missionaries came into my life when they did and shared with me their love and example. I was filled with joy to have one of them be my escort when I attended the temple to receive my endowment.

Following years of being lost and wandering, I had come home at last. □

Mavis Grace Jones is a member of the Bristol First Ward, Bristol England Stake.
Gospel topics: activation, repentance

I Hope You’ll All Remember Me

By David W. Heyen

I remember clearly the day I finally finished my four-generation family group records. I felt relief and a sense of accomplishment.

One morning a few years later, I awoke with a strong feeling I had left something undone in my family history and that *now* was the time to do it. The impression was so strong that it left me unsettled for days. The feeling of urgency grew the more I thought about it, until I decided I should visit Rockport, Missouri, the place my father’s family had lived as far back as anyone knew.

The only time I’d ever visited Rockport had been when I was 11. What would my relatives think of a long-lost family member showing up, looking for family records? But the urgency I felt was strong, so I decided to go through with my plans.

My fears about the visit were soon put to rest. All my relatives welcomed me with open arms and were gracious and cooperative. I was able to interview each one of

them at length and to record my great-grandmother’s narration of her life history.

I also spent hours at local libraries, churches, and cemeteries. I found that part of the reason my living relatives had so much trouble getting family history information for me was that most of the records and headstones in the cemeteries were in German, and no one could read them—no one, that is, except me. Because I had served a mission in Germany, I could translate the information and thus uncover many clues and missing links.

I became more and more astonished as piece after piece of my family’s history fell into place. Family lines I had abandoned because of lack of information suddenly began to produce name after name, date after date. I found old photographs of grandparents four and five generations back whose eyes seemed to plead with me, begging for my help.

In the end I obtained enough information to perform temple

ordinances for 18 of my ancestors. These were the people whose information I had previously given up all hope of ever finding.

Before my flight home I sat in the airport reviewing my notes and the original documents my great-grandmother had given me. I happened upon a poem written in 1830 by John Brown, my fourth great-grandfather. It read, in part:

*My Christian friends, both old
and young,
I hope, in Christ, you'll all be
strong. . . .
I hope you'll all remember me,
If no more my face you'll see.
And in trust, in prayers, I crave
That we shall meet beyond the grave.
Oh glorious day, Oh blessed hope.
My heart leaps forward at the
thought!
When in that happy land we'll
meet.*

*We'll no more take the parting
hand,
But with our holy blessed Lord,
We'll shout and sing
with one accord.*

My eyes filled with tears as the Holy Ghost whispered that these words from 1830 were written for me. I felt that my family members on the other side of the veil were determined not to be forgotten, and I knew that someday I would have the chance to meet them in that joyous reunion John Brown wrote of so very long ago.

I learned that we can play a vital part in our ancestors' eternal progression. By following the prompting I received, I found that a way

was opened to me in my search, and now I know we are never really finished with our family history responsibilities. □

David W. Heyen is a member of the Cornelius Ward, Hillsboro Oregon Stake.

Gospel topics: family history, Holy Ghost, temple work

My eyes filled with tears as I felt that these words, penned by my great-grandfather in 1830, were written for me.



Creating a Ward Newsletter?

Sometimes as members of the Church we are asked to create newsletters, sacrament and baptismal programs, or handouts or invitations for ward events. The following tips can help guide us in making appropriate printed materials for Church meetings and activities.

1. Keep the design simple.

Remember that less is often better. For instance, two complementary fonts (type styles) on a half-page sacrament meeting program are usually adequate. When documents require visuals, carefully consider the placement and how many are needed. Would one large visual look better than several small ones? Whatever the size of your document, keep in mind that a simple design best complements the text.

2. Choose appropriate images and fonts. To give an appropriate feel for the purpose of a document and the meeting it represents, be selective about the images and fonts you use. Refer to Church magazines and other Church publications for ideas. As you select images, be careful to check copyright restrictions. When selecting a font, also consider whether it is readable for members with impaired vision.

3. Carefully write and select text.

If you compile a ward newsletter, for instance, it is important that the tone of your writing be uplifting. It is fun to share anecdotes

about ward members, with their



permission. But do not print confidential information or anything that might embarrass them. In any document, it is also important to record facts correctly. People notice when their names are misspelled or when dates are listed incorrectly. While we all make mistakes, we can prevent many of these errors by taking a few moments to double-check details, use a computer spell checker, then re-read text to catch anything we may have missed earlier.

Though typing a program does not involve the same level of writing as a newsletter, content is still important and should reflect the meeting's purpose. For instance, when a sacrament meeting includes a departing or

returning missionary as one of the speakers, the printed program ought to focus mainly on the worship service.

Also, if a document includes inspirational thoughts, it is best to quote the scriptures as well as Church publications and leaders. Thoughts from other sources should be consistent with Church doctrine.

While we are counseled to "reduce and simplify," ward and stake leaders at times need to provide some printed materials to their local congregations. By thoughtfully preparing these documents, we can help set the right tone for many of our Church meetings and events.

Dinner and Dance Cards

Our branch presidency felt our youth needed an opportunity to mingle in a social environment where they could extend themselves to others and feel that they counted. To help accomplish this, we decided to have a "Line Up" dance and dinner. Though the concept is certainly not new, it was so successful that we thought others might benefit from learning about it.

First, we announced the dance to the youth, explaining that if they wanted to participate, the branch presidency would arrange a date for them. Because the branch presidency lined up all the dates, the pressure was off both the young men and young women. Then we had the young men call and arrange for the date and later return the young women home.

At the dinner, we asked the



Reverence Begins at Home

While serving as a stake Sunday School president, I visited classrooms to observe the instruction and class participation. Most of the classes were well taught and well received. Yet in some cases I noticed that student conversation caused interruptions or that some students were reluctant to participate in class discussions. To help remedy these problems, I felt that family home evening might be a good place to start. Years ago I counseled one of my own sons to serve as a silent aid to improve the conduct of his peers in one of his classes. It was so successful that years later I prepared a lesson for my extended family and subsequently shared it with other ward Sunday School presidents. Following are ideas for creating your own family home evening lesson about showing reverence in Sunday School as well as other Church classes.

1. *Role-play a distracting classroom situation.* Choose two family members to read two different

passages of the scriptures simultaneously. After the family has observed the confusion, ask if anyone has noticed similar background conversation during a lesson. What happens to our ability to learn and to feel the Spirit when an irreverent class situation occurs? Talk about appropriate behavior and what we hope to gain from attending a reverent, insightful class.

2. *List ways to improve classroom experiences.* Ask your children how they can be good examples and help others to participate appropriately in class. Emphasize

that they can help their friends contribute positively to a spiritual classroom experience. Write down everyone's suggestions for improving classroom experiences. Our family discussed these ideas:

- Encourage individual learning and self-improvement from every class.
- Take scriptures and suggested study materials to class.
- Show respect and kindness for the teacher and classmates.
- Ask for meanings of difficult words.
- Encourage others to participate meaningfully in class discussions.

Reverent participation in all Church classes is important for our spiritual edification. Above all, we can pray that the classroom situation will invite the Spirit, that the teacher will have the class's cooperation, and that the students will increase their understanding of the gospel and desire to live by righteous principles.—**Ronald L. Petersen, Valley View Fifth Ward, Layton Utah Valley View Stake**



young people to dance with a different partner each time. Mingling at the dance was successful because no one was with the same person for the entire evening.

The Sunday following the activity, there was new excitement as branch members gathered.

"We needed that," one young woman said. "We needed the opportunity to have fun in a non-threatening environment and to meet lots of people."

This activity required the leaders to do advance planning and then to follow through. The

youth who had originally agreed to participate rarely canceled. Though there were some last-minute changes, we worked together, and the dance was a great success.—**Mark G. Christensen, Greeley Second Ward, Greeley Colorado Stake**

Increasing Our Testimonies of Jesus Christ through Scripture Study

Read the following with the sisters you visit, and discuss the questions, scriptures, and teachings from our Church leaders. Share your experiences and testimony, and invite those you teach to do the same.

PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

“I promise you that if you will read the words of that writing which we call scripture, there will come into your heart an understanding and a warmth that will be pleasing to experience. ‘Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.’ (John 5:39.) Read . . . the Gospel of John. . . . Let the Lord speak for himself to you, and his words will come with a quiet conviction that will make the words of his critics meaningless. Read also the testament of the New World, the Book of Mormon, brought forth as a witness ‘that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.’ (Book of Mormon title page.)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1966, 87).

2 NEPHI 33:4

“And I know that the Lord God will consecrate my prayers for the gain of my people. And the words which I have written in weakness will be made strong unto them; for it persuadeth them to do good; it maketh known unto them of their fathers; and it speaketh

of Jesus, and persuadeth them to believe in him, and to endure to the end, which is life eternal.”

JACOB 4:6

“Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy; and having all these witnesses we obtain a hope, and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea.”

THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

“You remember the testimony which I bore in the name of the Lord Jesus, concerning the great work which He has brought forth in the last days. You know my manner of communication, how that in weakness and simplicity, I declared to you what the Lord had brought forth by the ministering of His holy angels to me for this generation. I pray that the Lord may enable you to treasure

these things in your mind, for I know that His Spirit will bear testimony to all who seek diligently after knowledge from Him. I hope you will search the Scriptures to see whether these things are not also consistent with those things which the ancient Prophets and Apostles have written” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 29).

HELAMAN 15:7–8

“And behold, ye do know of yourselves, for ye have witnessed it, that as many of them as are brought to the knowledge of the truth . . . and are led to believe the holy scriptures, yea, the prophecies of the holy prophets, which are written, which leadeth them to faith on the Lord, and unto repentance, which faith and repentance bringeth a change of heart unto them—

“Therefore, as many as have come to this, ye know of yourselves are firm and steadfast in the faith, and in the thing where-with they have been made free.”

ELDER NEAL A. MAXWELL OF THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

“The igniting in our youth of a love for the holy scriptures is to ignite a fire that will probably never be extinguished. After all, our youth can take their scriptures and their understanding thereof with them long after parents, bishops, and advisers, of necessity, are left behind” (“Unto the Rising Generation,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1985, 10).

QUESTIONS

- How can scripture study strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ?
- In what ways can we promote an increased desire for regular scripture study in ourselves, our families, and the youth or children we may be called to teach? □

The igniting in our youth of a love for the holy scriptures is to ignite a fire that will probably never be extinguished.”

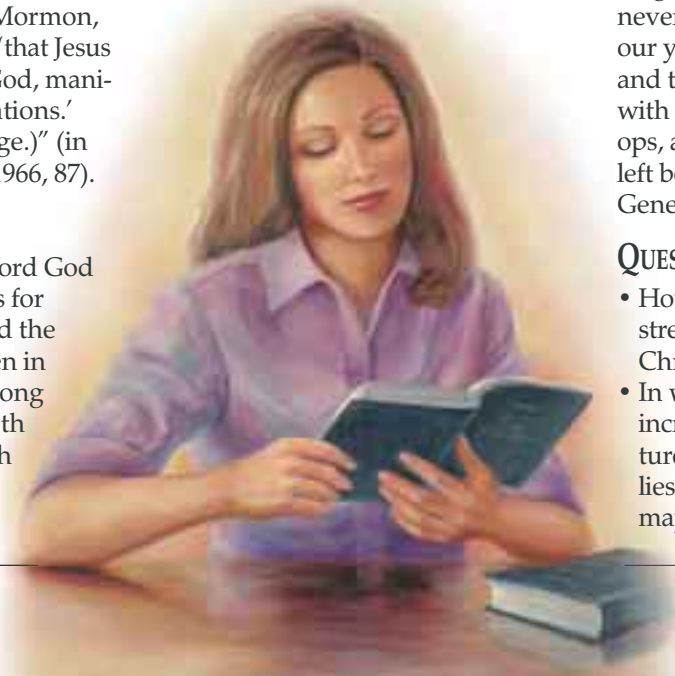




PHOTO BY JAY BOROWCZYK

The Tabernacle Choir and the Utah Symphony Orchestra, directed by Keith Lockhart, perform together for a PBS holiday special.

Mormon Tabernacle Choir Appears on Three U.S. National Programs

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir appeared on three U.S. national television programs during the month of December: the CBS TV news magazine *60 Minutes II*, a PBS Christmas Eve special, and the CBS weekly series *Touched by an Angel*.

The choir was featured on *60 Minutes II*'s 19 December program. The report included scenes from the choir's 2001 Christmas concert in the Conference Center and an interview with actress Angela Lansbury, who performed as a guest artist during the concert. The segment also included interviews with director Craig Jessop, choir president Mac Christensen, and four choir members.

"For more than a century and a half, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir has performed in more than 60 countries before tens of millions of people, including nine U.S. presidents,"

said news correspondent Charlie Rose on the program. "They've recorded more than 150 albums, and their weekly radio and television broadcast has been on the air, uninterrupted, since 1929. They were there on 11 September to soothe a grieving nation, and they'll be there to celebrate when the Olympics come to Salt Lake City."

On Christmas Eve, the Utah Symphony and Tabernacle Choir performed together for a PBS holiday special, "The Gift of Music," a 90-minute concert taped during a live performance under the direction of Keith Lockhart, symphony conductor. The concert featured soloists Henriette Schellenberg, Robert Breault, and Robert Honeysucker.

The choir sang "Battle Hymn of the Republic" in a closing scene of a special Christmas episode of *Touched by an Angel* broadcast on 16 December. □

President James E. Faust Dedicates New Monument to Pioneer Women

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, recently dedicated a monument to pioneer women. A bronze statue of a widow and her young son leaving behind the grave of a small daughter, the monument now stands on the grounds of the Pioneer Museum near the Utah State Capitol in Salt Lake City.

Latter-day Saint sculptor Karl Quilter, who also designed a statue depicting the angel Moroni that tops most of the Church's temples, was commissioned by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers to create the statue. The dedication of the statue marked the climax of a yearlong centennial celebration for the organization.

In paying tribute to

those pioneers who sacrificed so much, President Faust quoted from an October 1947 general conference address by President J. Reuben Clark, Jr. (1871–1961): "Back in the last wagon, not always could they see the Brethren way out in front, and the blue heaven was often shut out from their sight by heavy, dense clouds of the dust of the earth. Yet day after day, they of the last wagon pressed forward . . . borne up by their faith that God loved them, that the restored gospel was true and that the Lord led and directed the Brethren out in front" ("They of the Last Wagon," in Conference Report, Oct. 1947, 156; see also "To Them of the Last Wagon," *Ensign*, July 1997, 36). □



PHOTO BY TOM SMART, DESERET NEWS

President James E. Faust joins members of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers at the dedication of a new monument to pioneer women.



The CD-ROM edition of the scriptures instantly puts the standard works, study guides, maps, and visual aids at the user's fingertips.

Scriptures Released on CD-ROM

The Church recently released its first authorized CD-ROM edition of the scriptures. *The Scriptures: CD-ROM Standard Edition 1.0* allows computer users to search, print, or copy scriptural texts, study guides, maps, and photos.

"This new edition is intended to help individuals and families enhance their study of the scriptures," said Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "As families use this new computer tool to search the scriptures and study gospel principles, their faith will increase, testimonies will grow, and family ties will be strengthened."

This complete scripture resource is designed to accommodate users of all ages. Basic search functions provide rapid access to visual aids and broad topics or specific passages, assisting with lesson and talk preparation.

The Scriptures: CD-ROM Standard Edition 1.0 contains the full text of the

Church's authorized scriptures in English, along with all of the official study aids, including the Topical Guide and Bible Dictionary. The CD also contains the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price in French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. Study aids available in all five of these languages include the Guide to the Scriptures (a topical compilation of cross-references and definitions), chapter headings, footnotes, selections from the Joseph Smith Translation, maps, and photographs.

Future editions of the CD-ROM may include more languages as they become available.

The Scriptures: CD-ROM Standard Edition 1.0 (item no. 50400; U.S. \$5) may be purchased through local ward clerks, at local Church distribution centers, on the Internet at www.ldscatalog.com, or by calling 1-800-537-5971 (in the United States and Canada only). □

Disasters in Various Countries Affect Lives of Church Members

Church members in Peru, Brazil, Australia, and Tonga were affected by disasters that struck their countries in late December and early January.

Two members perished and one member family lost their home in Lima, Peru, when a series of fireworks set a crowded market street on fire. Nearly 1,000 people were reported dead or missing. One of the members killed was a young woman who had just received her mission call and was shopping for clothes for her mission. The other was the daughter of a local bishop.

The Church provided \$5,000 to purchase bandages and other medical



Flooding in Petropolis, Brazil, took the lives of 50 people and destroyed 300 homes.

supplies, which were donated to local hospitals.

In Petropolis, Brazil, a Church member was



Stake presidents join workers in unloading Church-donated tarps and chainsaws after Cyclone Waka struck Tonga's Vava'u Island group. The relief supplies were distributed to local members in need.

killed, 10 member families lost their homes, and a meetinghouse was slightly damaged when torrential rains and mudslides hit the state of Rio de Janeiro. A total of 50 people lost their lives, and 300 homes were destroyed in the disaster. Displaced members were assisted by local members and leaders using local welfare funds.

In Australia, two member families lost their homes when bushfires burned near Sydney, destroying more than 100 houses and forcing the evacuation of several thousand people. Two meetinghouses in the vicinity of the fires were made available for emergency use, and local welfare resources were used to assist the members who lost their homes.

Eleven member families lost their homes when Cyclone Waka struck the Vava'u Island group in Tonga. Emergency relief supplies, including tarps, chainsaws, nails, and plastic water containers, were shipped to the area from Church temporal offices on Tonga's main island of Nuku'alofa. □



PHOTO BY JED CLARK

A scene from the Church pageant *Martin Harris: The Man Who Knew* performed in Clarkston, Utah.

2002 Church Pageant Schedule

Pageant	Location	Dates
<i>Jesus the Christ</i>	Mesa, Arizona	21, 26–30 March (English) 22–23 March (Spanish)
<i>Mormon Miracle</i>	Manti, Utah	13–15, 18–22 June
<i>America's Witness for Christ</i>	Palmyra, New York	5–6, 9–13 July
<i>And It Came to Pass</i>	Oakland, California	13, 16–20, 23–27 July
<i>Castle Valley</i>	Castle Dale, Utah	25–27, 30–31 July; 1–3 August
<i>City of Joseph</i>	Nauvoo, Illinois	26–27, 30–31 July; 1–3 August
<i>Martin Harris: The Man Who Knew</i>	Clarkston, Utah	9–10, 13–17, 20–24 August

All pageants are free of charge, but the Clarkston and Oakland pageants require tickets. For more information on any of the pageants call 1-801-240-7800.

LDS Foundation Opens Web Link on lds.org

A new link on the Church's Web site can help members interested in charitable giving. The link is for the LDS Foundation, which serves as a central coordinating agency for charitable giving to the Church.

Under the direction of the Presiding Bishopric, the LDS Foundation assists

those interested in making donations toward the Perpetual Education Fund, Church Welfare Services and humanitarian aid, temple work, missionary labor, or the Church's educational institutions. The foundation's Web pages help users learn what the Church's charitable priorities are and

how donations are affecting the lives of those receiving them.

The link, found under "Other Resources" on www.lds.org, can also be accessed at www.ldsfoundation.org. □



Learn about charitable ways to give through a new link on the Church's official Web site.

In the Spotlight

AUSTRALIAN MEMBER WINS INTERNATIONAL PEACE PRIZE

An Australian Church member received in October the 2001 Pax Christi International Peace Prize for his efforts to promote understanding and reconciliation between indigenous and nonindigenous Australians.

Eddie Kneebone of the Albury Ward, Albury New South Wales Australia Stake, is a descendant of the Pangangarang Aboriginal clan. For some 20 years Brother Kneebone has lectured about Aboriginal culture, history, and art to young Australians, seeking to promote social awareness and acceptance between people of different backgrounds. He also writes extensively on Aboriginal culture to assist in the education of public service workers and those involved in health care, police services, and the army.

Pax Christi International is a nonprofit, nongovernmental Catholic peace movement represented in 30 countries, with some 60,000 members of various denominations worldwide.

LATTER-DAY SAINT CONDUCTOR MAKING MARK IN SYMPHONY

Bundit Ungrangsee, a member of the Mount Pleasant Ward, Charleston South Carolina Stake, is receiving excellent reviews as associate conductor of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra.

A native of Thailand,

Brother Ungrangsee joined the Church in April 2000 after coming to Salt Lake City as an associate conductor of the Utah Symphony Orchestra. Also while living in Utah, Brother Ungrangsee met and married in the Salt Lake Temple Mary Jane Jones, who had served a mission in Thailand. Last December Sister Ungrangsee performed as soprano soloist in the Charleston Symphony Orchestra.

Brother Ungrangsee has conducted symphonic



Bundit Ungrangsee

performances and operas throughout the United States and has made guest conducting appearances in Australia, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Georgia, Austria, Russia, Portugal, Mexico, and Italy.

MEMBER COUPLE CHOSEN AS PARENTS OF THE YEAR

Ezekiel and Pauline Sanchez of the Thayer Park Ward, Mesa Arizona Mountain View Stake, were chosen in 2001 as Arizona's Parents of the Year by the American Family Coalition. The first Native Americans to receive the award, the Sanchezes were recognized for their



PHOTO BY MARILYN FARR

Sisters of the Pima Arizona Stake made and donated more than 2,000 dresses to the Humanitarian Center after hearing of the need.

outstanding example in raising their own seven children and for their many years of volunteer work in assisting at-risk youth.

ARIZONA STAKE DONATES MORE THAN 2,000 DRESSES

When the Relief Society sisters of the Pima Arizona Stake heard of the Church Humanitarian Center's ongoing need for girls' dresses, they set a goal of collecting 2001 dresses in the year 2001. The Relief Society sisters donated gently used dresses, fabric, and cutting and sewing

time to make new dresses. When the year ended, they had surpassed their goal by more than 100 dresses. The clothing was donated to Humanitarian Services and to Deseret Industries.

MISSIONARY STARTS DENTAL PROJECT IN COOK ISLANDS

When Church service missionary and volunteer dentist Richard Anderson began to serve in the Cook Islands, he became concerned about the dental health of the local children. With the support of Church Humanitarian



PHOTO BY RICHARD ANDERSON

Thanks to efforts of missionaries, children in the Cook Islands are learning dental hygiene and improving their dental health.

Services and the Cook Islands government, Brother Anderson and his wife, Diane, began an ongoing dental health campaign in the country.

Local members and missionaries have assembled thousands of dental hygiene kits, provided by a grant from the Church and distributed by missionaries and school dental nurses who instruct children in how to use them. The grant also funded the delivery of a modern dental chair and dental instruments donated by an individual in Germany.

The program has been well received by the local people and government. Now, when children see one of the missionaries, “they all wave and point to their smiles,” says Brother Anderson.

NO TUITION INCREASES AT BYU OR BYU—IDAHO

Tuition for BYU and BYU—Idaho will not increase for the 2002–03 school year, the two schools have announced.

A semester’s tuition at BYU for the coming year will be \$1,530 for undergraduates, \$1,930 for graduate students, and \$3,070 for law school and graduate school of management students. Tuition at BYU—Idaho will stay at \$1,240 per semester.

This will be the first year since 1973 that the two schools have not had tuition increases. Both expect to have normal tuition increases in the future. □

Comment



Scheduling Priesthood and Relief Society Lessons

On page 63 of the December *Ensign* it states that ward leaders are to coordinate a schedule for teaching each chapter in the *Teachings of Presidents of the Church* books. This seems to contradict the instructions in *Information for Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders on Curriculum* (2001–4), which says that the lessons should be taught in the order presented in the book. I would appreciate a clarification on how we should proceed.

Ashley Peterson
Scranton, Pennsylvania

It is the responsibility of ward Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society leaders, under the direction of the bishopric, to coordinate a unified schedule for the presentation of these lessons. It is recommended that the lessons be taught in the order presented in the book. However, if leaders are unified and feel that the schedule needs to vary from the order in the book to meet local needs, they may change the order.

For Teens Too

I am a young woman who, when my family moved to a new area two years ago, had a hard time adjusting. I felt like a weed in a bed of flowers when I

went to church. I attended only once a month for about a year and a half. I never lost my faith, but I still felt like a weed.

One day I happened to pick up the *Ensign* and, flipping through the pages, stopped to read the Latter-

day Saint Voices. I began crying as the personal stories touched me.

Since then I have become more active, have started catching up on my *Personal Progress*, and am now preparing to receive my patriarchal blessing. I’m also trying to be an example to less-active family members.

I want to thank all the Church members who have sent in their stories and the *Ensign* for publishing them.

Rachelle Cox
Albany, Oregon



Burdens Eased

Thank you for the article “Easing the Burdens of Mental Illness” (Oct. 2001). I am married to a man who is mentally ill and for the past several years has lived in his car, avoiding all contact with my children and me.

I am grateful for the power of prayer and the close relationship I have developed with my Heavenly Father over these difficult years. My children and I have developed

strong testimonies, a love for the Church, and a knowledge that the Lord is with us always.

I appreciate seeing articles about mental illness in Church publications. I hope that as people are exposed to articles on mental illness, support and understanding for families like mine will be more available.

Name Withheld

I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for your article on mental illness as well as other articles on depression.

Such articles are a great blessing to those of us Latter-day Saints who struggle in silence and secrecy with these disorders.

I am grateful to you and to Church leaders for bringing these issues from a frightening darkness into a loving light.

Name Withheld

Blessed by Their Words

I want to thank the Church leaders who share their testimonies with us in the *Ensign* every month. How comforting it is to me to know my life is blessed because they

choose to exemplify the principles of the gospel. I am truly grateful to feel the Spirit through their words.

April Gutzwiller
Kaysville, Utah

By having pass-along cards with us to give away, my wife and I have had four good missionary experiences. Thank you for providing these missionary tools.

Terence and Louise Goss
Laurel, Montana

Making the Most of This Issue

M A R C H 2 0 0 2

Shouldering Our Responsibility

The temptation to try to escape the consequences of our actions is common, says Elder Robert S.

Wood of the Seventy.

Yet it is crucial that we accept responsibility for our behavior. See p. 27.

The Old Testament and You

• What would it have been like to wander through the wilderness of Sinai? Put yourself in the shoes of the ancient children of Israel facing fiery flying serpents. In approaching the promised land, would you have been a wall watcher or a grape gatherer? See p. 32.

• The Old Testament is like the root system of a beautiful, nurturing tree. You can learn more about it beginning on p. 38.

Trying to Build Faith?

"We do not increase our faith by following a formula," says Elder John K. Carmack of the Seventy. "Nor does the increase come through definitions, logic, or philosophy." So how do we increase our faith? See p. 53.

Help with Chronic Illnesses

What gospel resources can aid individuals who are struggling with chronic illnesses? How can others help? Church members offer ideas and insights on p. 58.

The Pocket Missionary

Learn how to use the Church's new pass-along

cards through the experiences of members in the California Sacramento Mission, p. 64. Then try it yourself using the newest card, provided with the insert in this magazine.

Now That You're an Editor . . .

How can you create an appropriate ward newsletter or a handout for Church meetings or activities? Follow three simple guidelines found on p. 72.

Home Teachers and Visiting Teachers

Find the monthly messages on pp. 2 and 74.

Did You Know?

When you move, you can ensure your Church magazines will follow you to your new home without a break. If you are in the United States or Canada, as soon as you know your new address, call 1-800-537-5971 and report the change. If you live in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, or another country, you can contact the nearest Church distribution center to report your new address.



For a Stronger Family

• Want to strengthen your family's appreciation for the Book of Mormon? Review how the book came into—and changed—one woman's life, p. 68.

• Want to help everyone in your family or group get excited about family history? Share "I Hope You'll All Remember Me," p. 70.

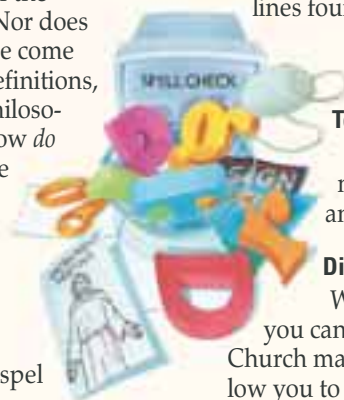
• Need help in teaching your children to be reverent in Church classes? Try this in family home evening: role-play a distracting classroom situation. For more on this tip and others, see p. 73.

Seven Ways to Improve a Marriage

If you're looking for ways to strengthen your relationship with your spouse, try these suggestions, already field-tested in the home. See p. 24.

On Womanhood and Motherhood

Rejuvenate your spirit through words and art that pay tribute to motherhood and womanhood, pp. 8–15.



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Rose Garden Moment, by Anne Marie Oborn



"How fortunate, how blessed is the child who feels the affection of his parents. That warmth, that love will bear sweet fruit in the years that follow"
(Gordon B. Hinckley, "Behold Your Little Ones," Ensign, June 2001, 2).



PHOTO BY BRIAN K. KELLY

Members in New Zealand are learning together what it means to be members of one fold.